

JONATHAN HICKMAN • BRYAN HITCH • ANDREW CURRIE • ALEX SINCLAIR

ULTIMATE INVASION



MARVEL

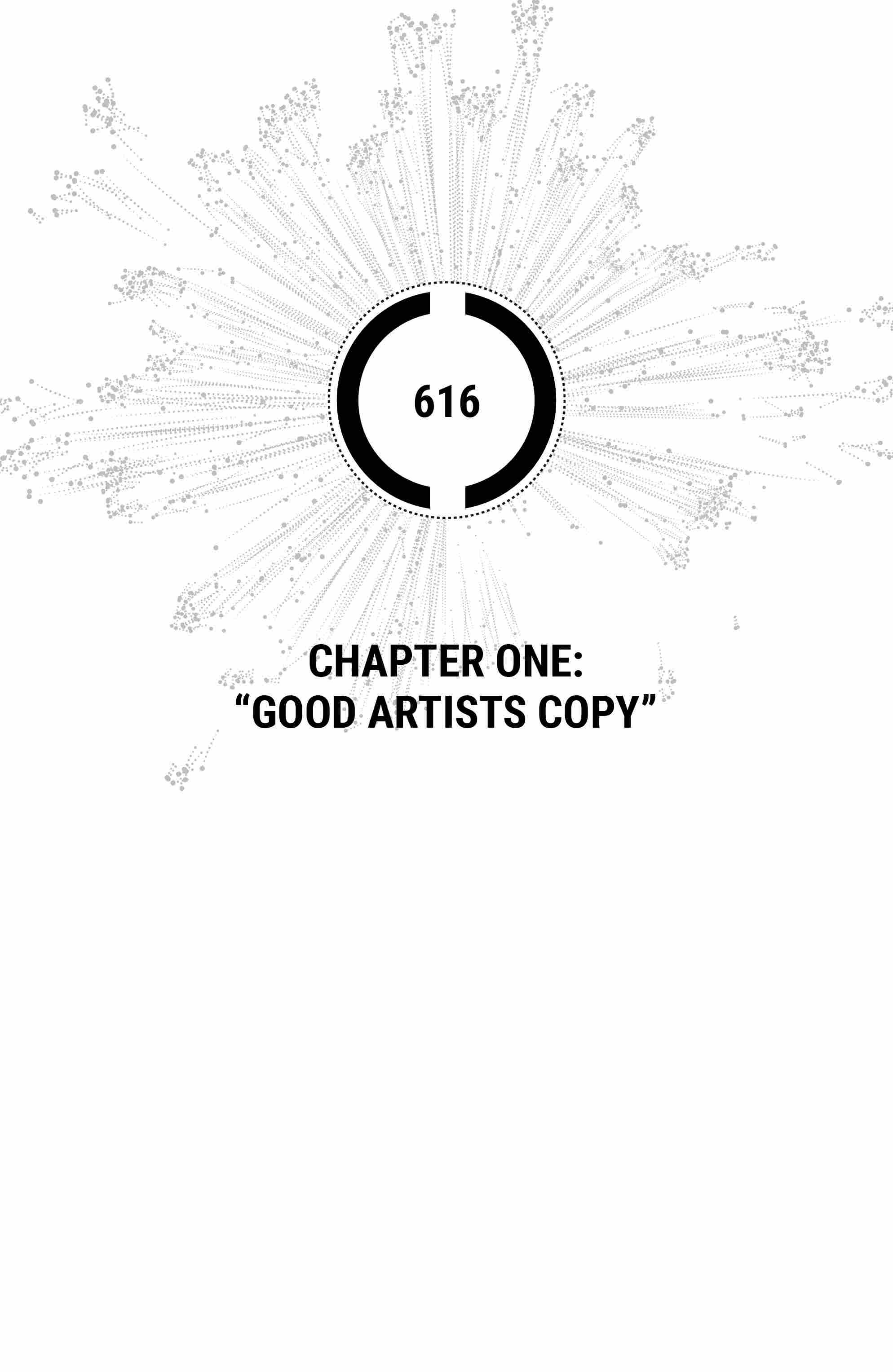
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MARVEL
1



616

**CHAPTER ONE:
“GOOD ARTISTS COPY”**



TWO MONTHS
AGO.



THE BLAAKGUARD
BUILDING.



WE'RE
HERE.



ONE MINUTE.



POINT OF ENTRY?

WE'RE GOING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR?

SEE THE WINDOW BESIDE YOU? IF YOU LOOK OUT, YOU'LL SEE A BIG BUILDING. GO AHEAD AND DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE 'TWEEN HERE AND THERE.

UH-HUH. WE'RE GONNA WALK RIGHT IN.

...
HOW MANY GUARDS?



A LOT. ALONG WITH AN AUTOMATED FIRING PLATFORM AND A SECURITY SYSTEM THAT CAN'T BE EXTERNALLY HACKED OR DISABLED.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT.



OKAY. WHAT IS?

SAME AS ALWAYS. GETTIN' OUT WITH WHAT WE CAME FOR.



IT'S TIME.

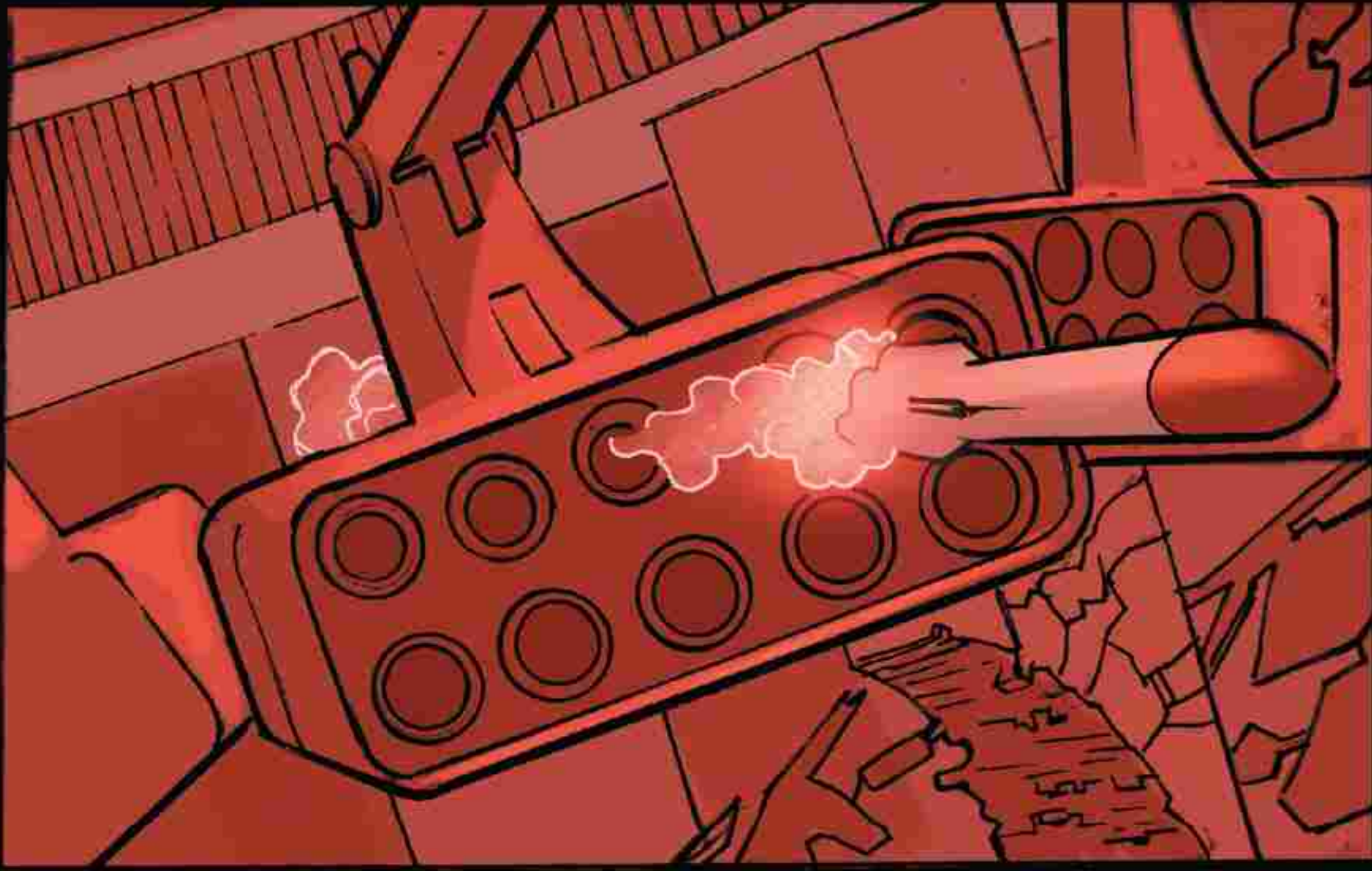
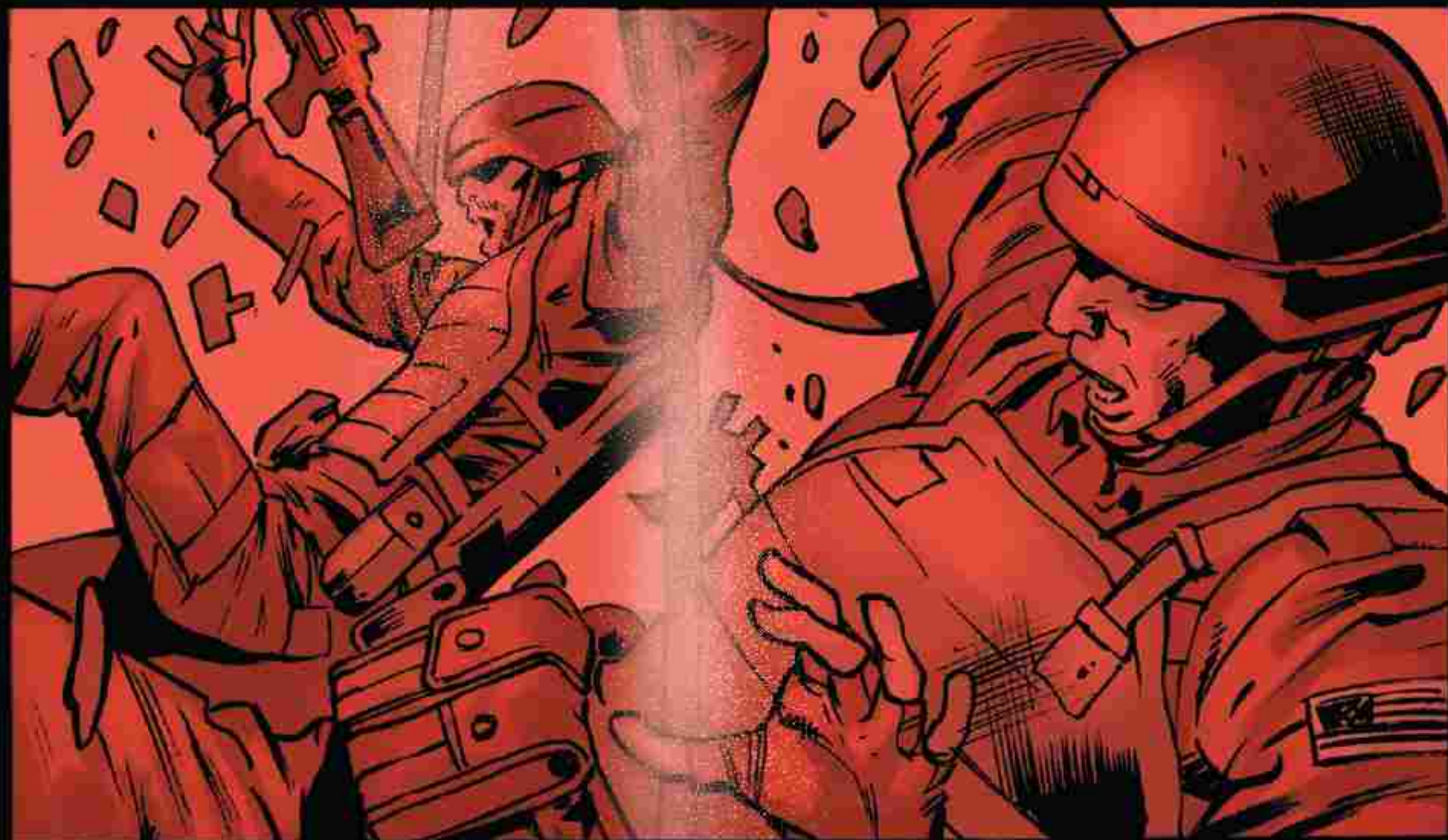




HOW AM
I NOT DEAD?
I CAN'T BELIEVE
I'M NOT--

IT'S NOT
LUCK, IDIOT,
IT'S THE SUIT.
NOW FOCUS ON
THE JOB!





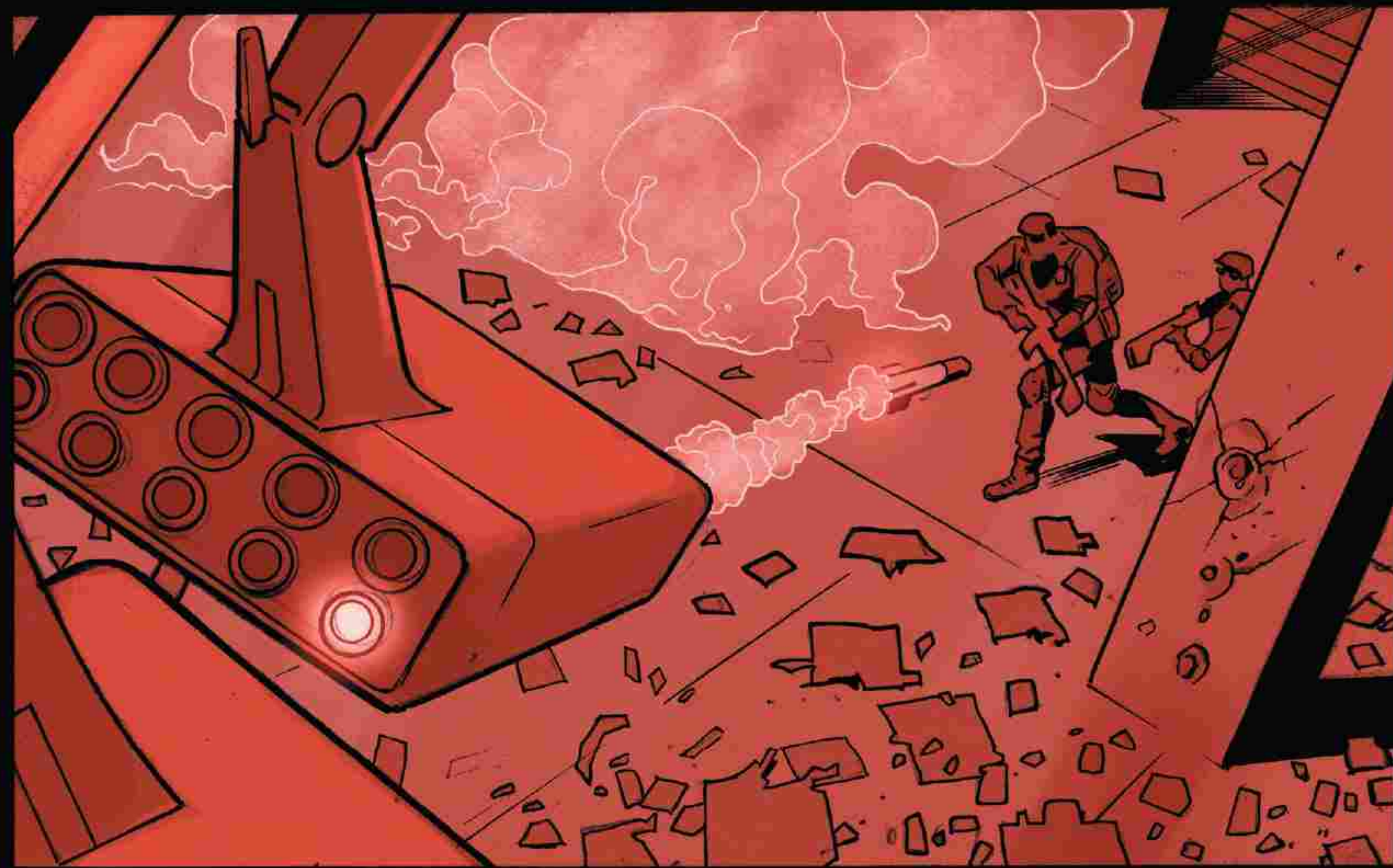
...
FELT
THAT
ONE.

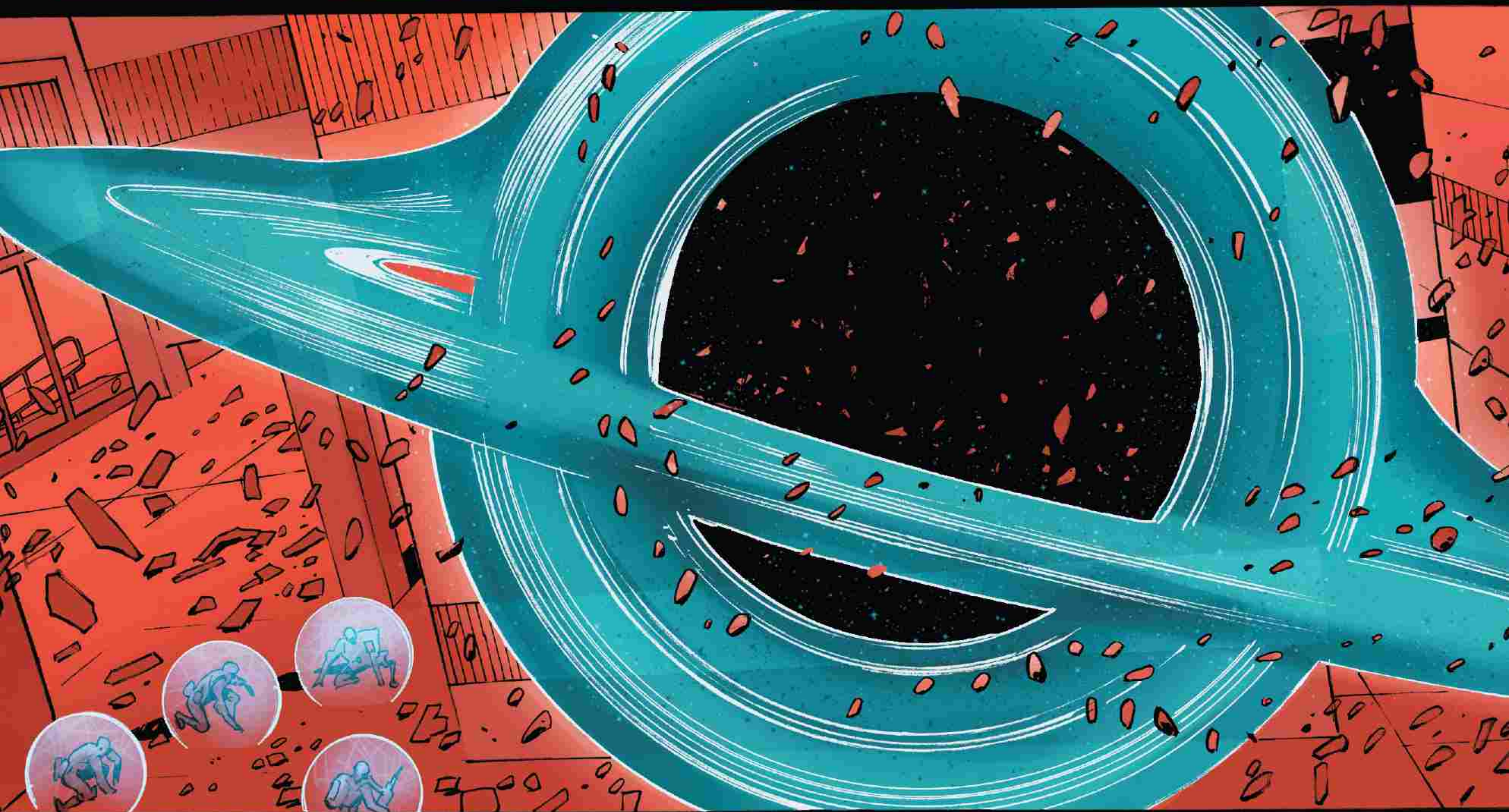


WE'VE GOT TO
TAKE THAT
THING OUT.

TELL YOU
WHAT, YOU FIND THE
MANAGER AND LODGE
A COMPLAINT...

...AND I'LL
TRY SOMETHING
A LITTLE MORE DIRECT.









DID I HEAR YOU SAY A BILLION DOLLARS?

YES.

GO IN THREE, TWO, ONE...



OKAY. SO SHOULDN'T MY SHARE BE A QUARTER OF THAT?

DID YOU FIND THE JOB? PLAN THE JOB? DID YOU DO ANYTHING AT ALL BEFORE YESTERDAY?

NO.

THEN JUST TAKE YOUR TEN-MILLION-DOLLAR CUT, SAY THANK YOU, AND BE DONE WITH IT.

ALL CLEAR.



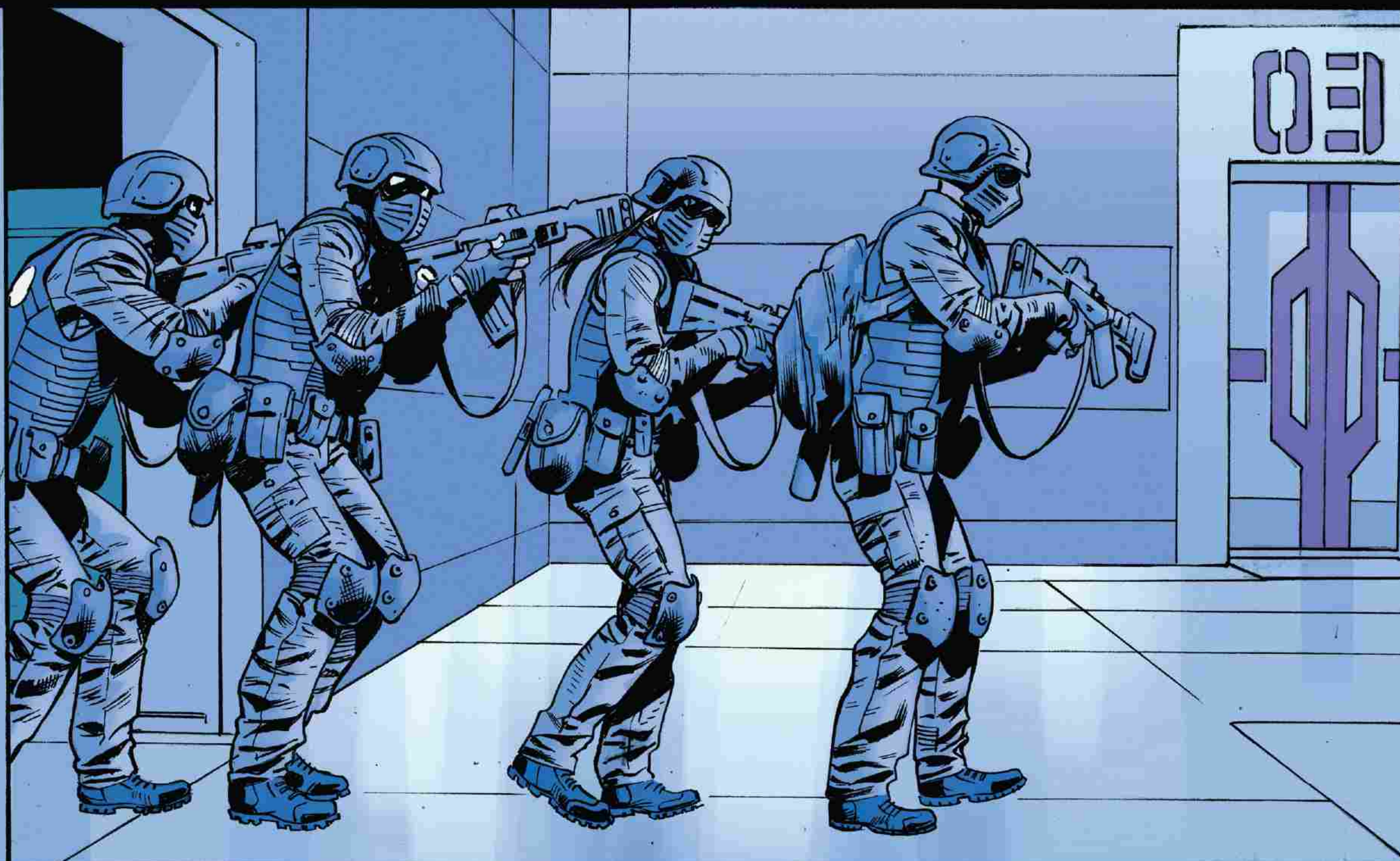
SO THERE'S A GIANT PILE OF MONEY WAITING FOR US WHEN WE STEP OUT OF THIS ELEVATOR?



NO.

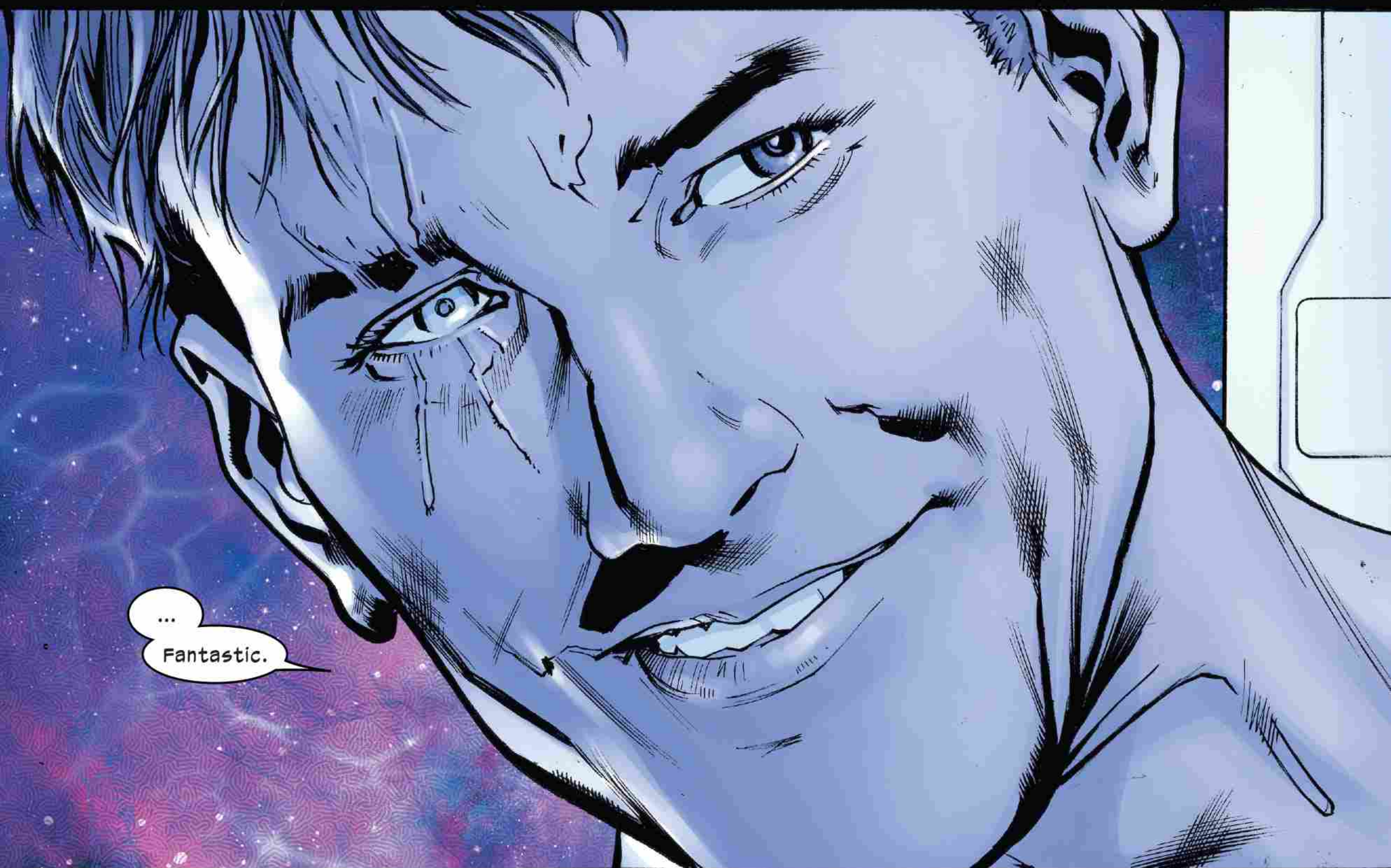
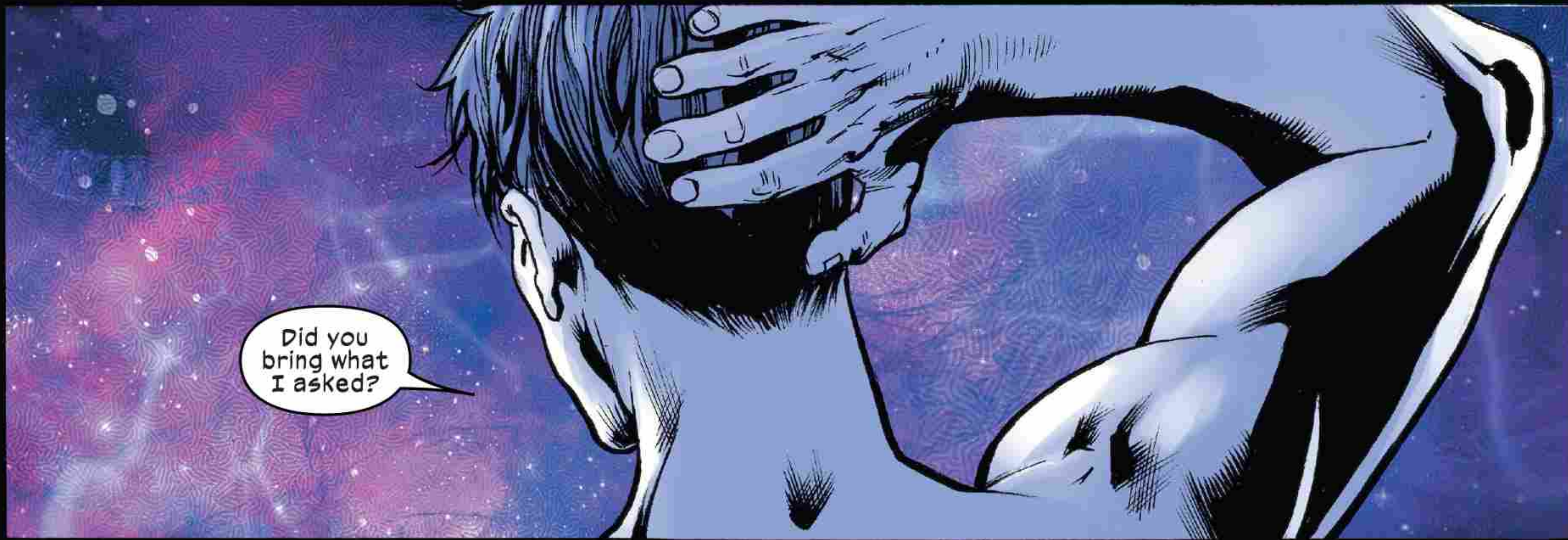


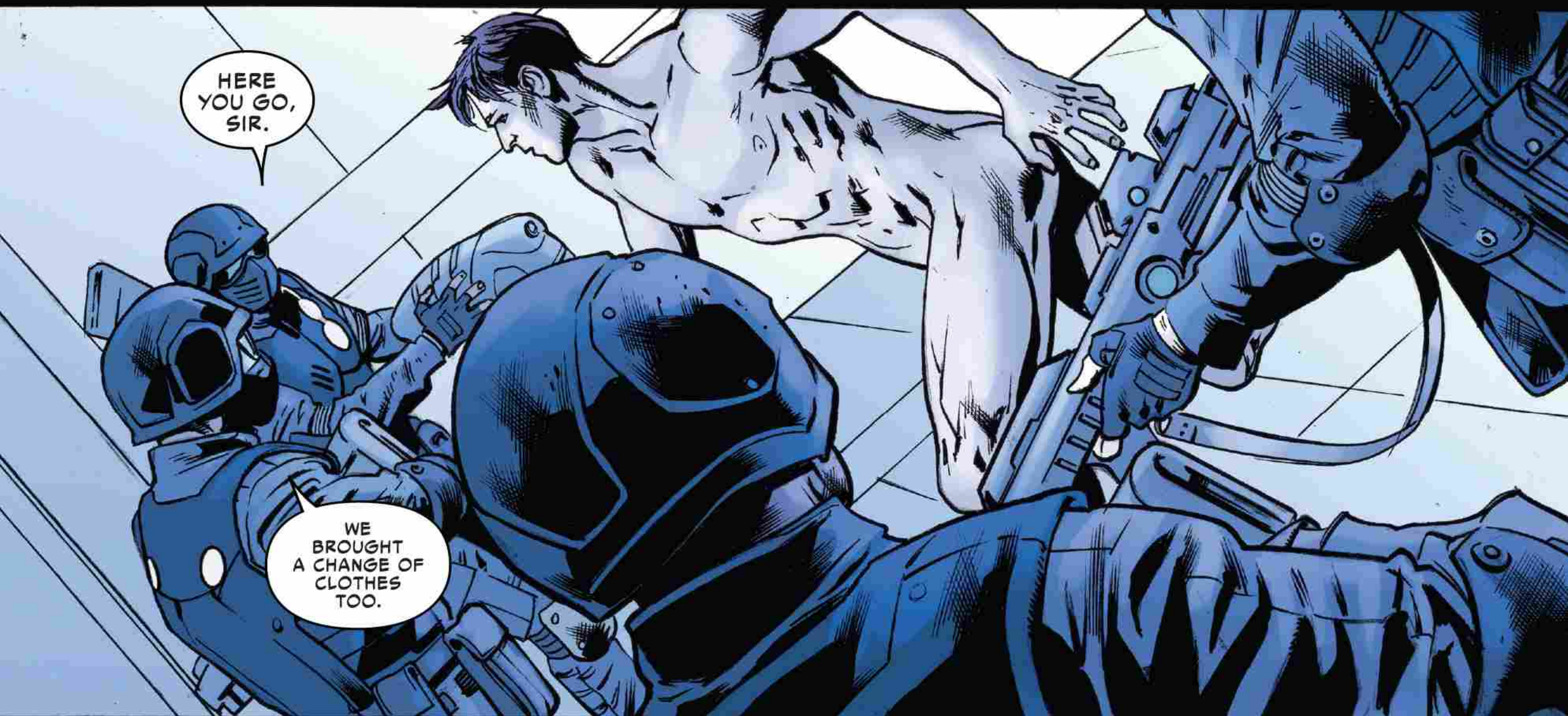
OKAY. BUT BEHIND THE DOOR...THERE'S A GIANT PILE OF MONEY?





Right on
time.





HERE YOU GO, SIR.

WE BROUGHT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES TOO.



First things first.



AGREED.

WHERE'S OUR MONEY?

Where all money is...floating in the ether. Awaiting summons from an imaginary state to a more believable fiction.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE IT.

I promise you. Whatever "it" is...I most certainly do have it.



AM I REALLY SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THIS GUY DID ALL THIS FROM INSIDE OF A PRISON...

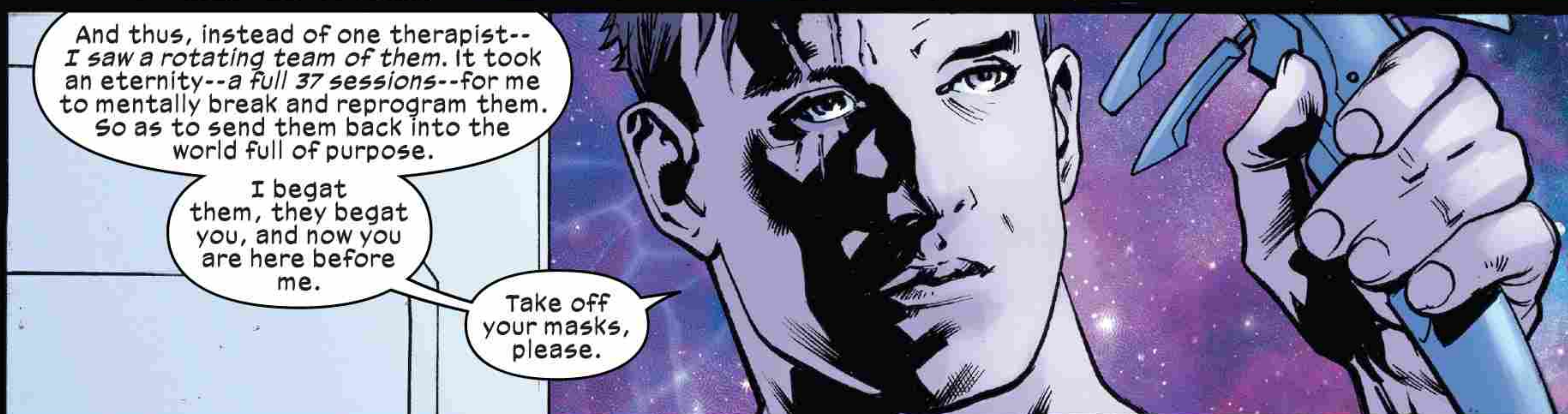
...BUT HE COULDN'T GET HIMSELF OUT?



The trick is not escaping, it's escaping without anyone knowing you've gone.

My captors-- *benevolent souls* that they are--deemed it necessary for me to receive the required *care* a civilized society demands for those touched by the world in a particular way.

But they also knew that I was, well, so very me. So precautions had to be taken.



And thus, instead of one therapist-- I saw a rotating team of them. It took an eternity--a full 37 sessions--for me to mentally break and reprogram them. So as to send them back into the world full of purpose.

I begat them, they begat you, and now you are here before me.

Take off your masks, please.



WHY WOULD WE DO THAT?



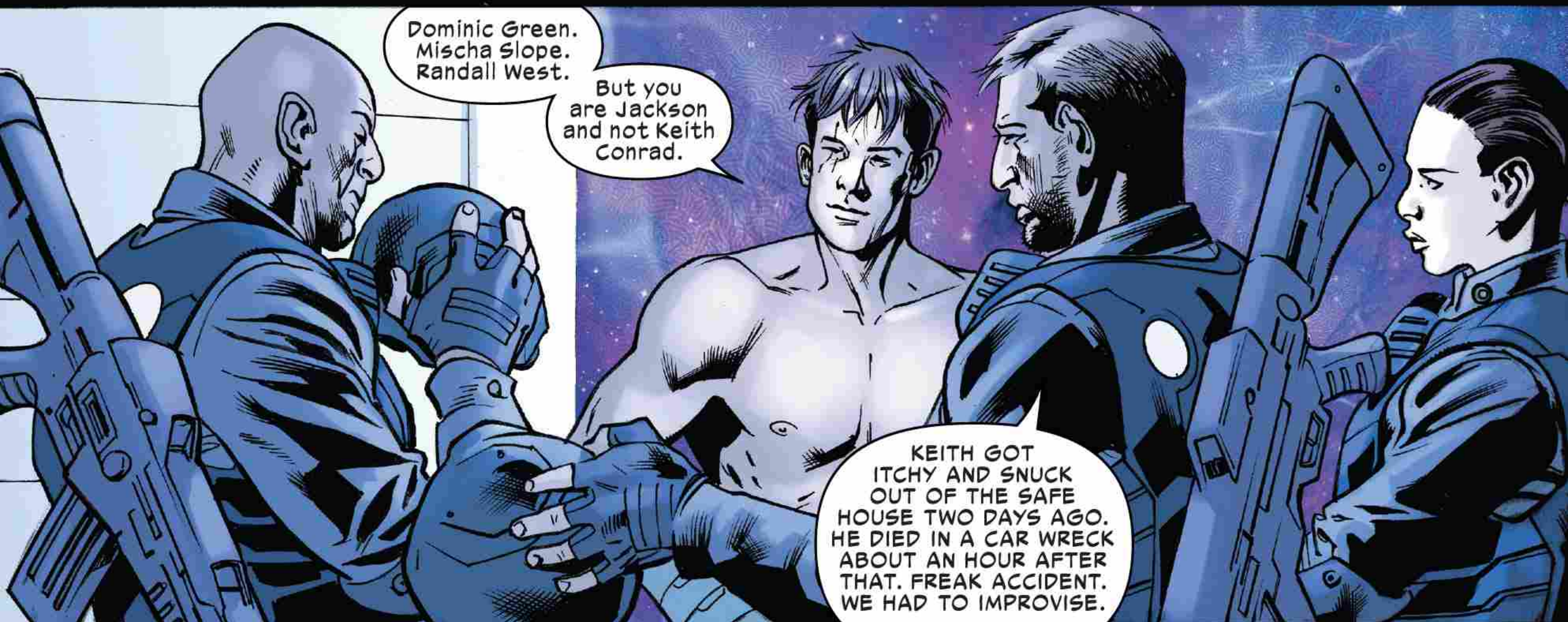
JUST DO IT.



Each of you were recruited for the job. I chose you after my flock carefully examined each of your profiles and geneti--

Who are you?

I'M JACKSON.



Dominic Green.
Mischa Slope.
Randall West.

But you
are Jackson
and not Keith
Conrad.

KEITH GOT
ITCHY AND SNUCK
OUT OF THE SAFE
HOUSE TWO DAYS AGO.
HE DIED IN A CAR WRECK
ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER
THAT. FREAK ACCIDENT.
WE HAD TO IMPROVISE.



Ah. The unforeseen
complications of impatience
and ennui. Trapped here, I'd
forgotten what *most* people
call discipline.

I, of course,
planned for overlap, but
the genetic sequencing was
for you four for a reason.
Each and every ingredient
is what makes for
good soup.

This will
present as
a less than one-
percent anomaly.
Most people would
miss it...



...but I
wouldn't. And
he certainly
won't.

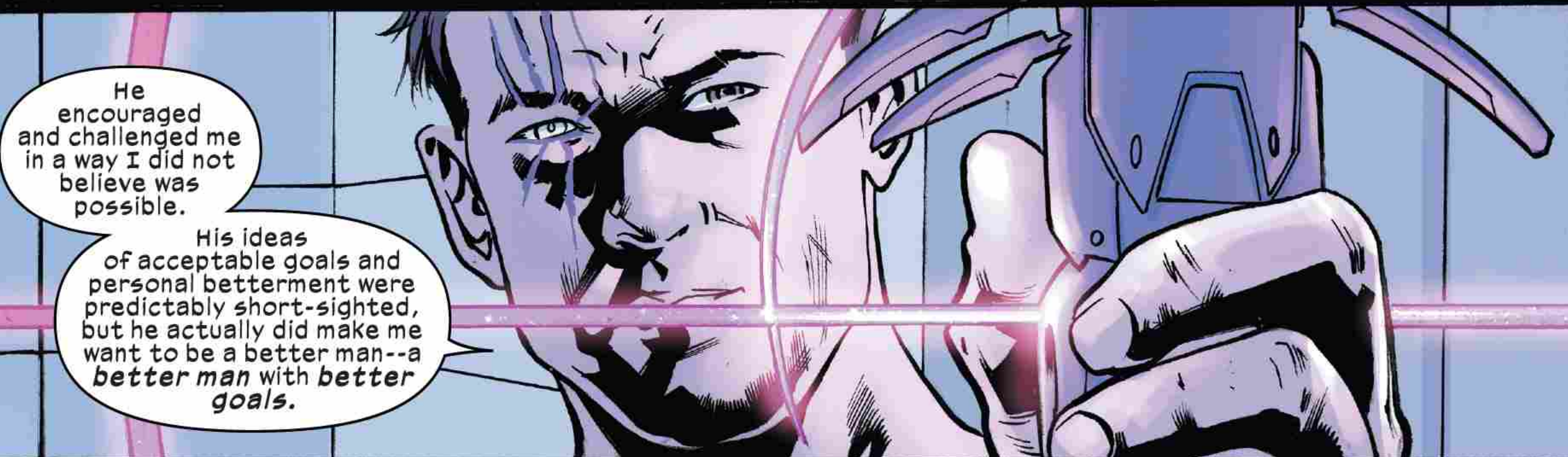
Which *vexes*
me. To no end.
I suppose my choice
now is a subtle prayer
or a more "on brand"
message.



IT WAS LAST MINUTE.
THIS WAS THE BEST
I COULD DO.

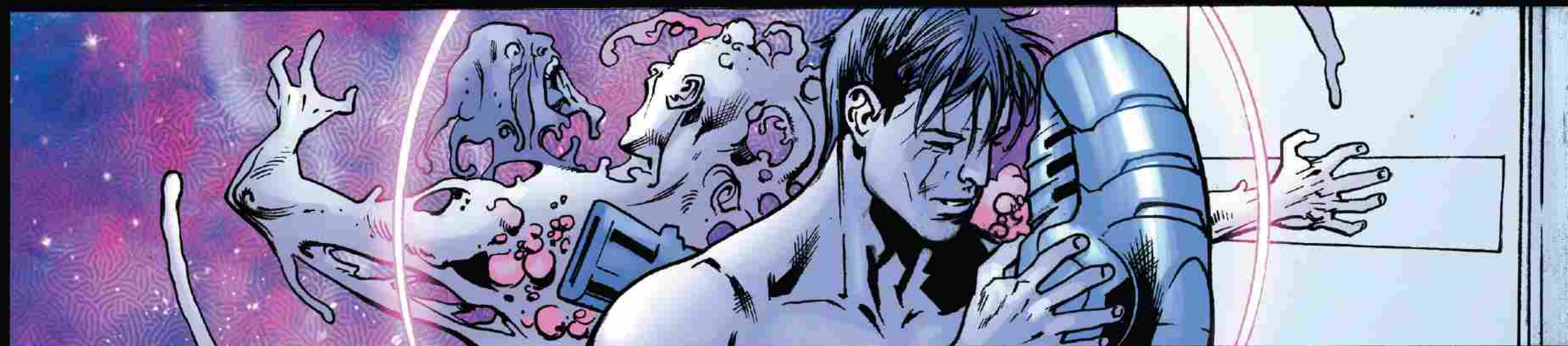
Your best?

There was one of
my therapists in here
who--before I did what
had to be done--did have a
surprising effect on me...



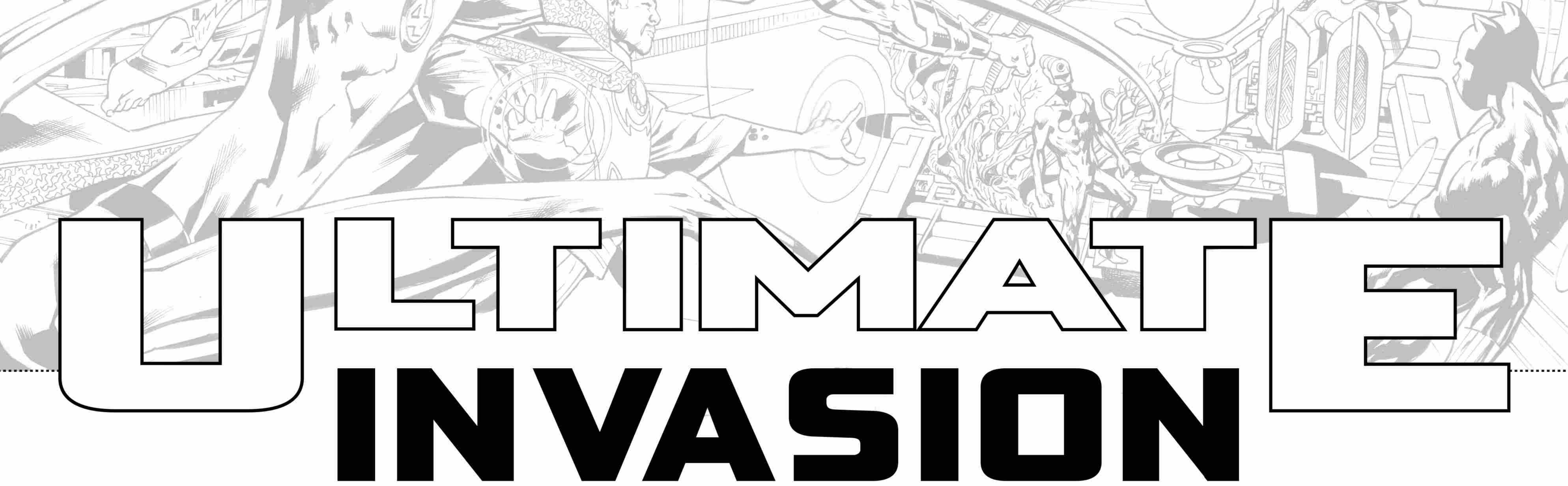
He
encouraged
and challenged me
in a way I did not
believe was
possible.

His ideas
of acceptable goals and
personal betterment were
predictably short-sighted,
but he actually did make me
want to be a better man--a
*better man with better
goals.*





MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS...



ULTIMATE INVASION

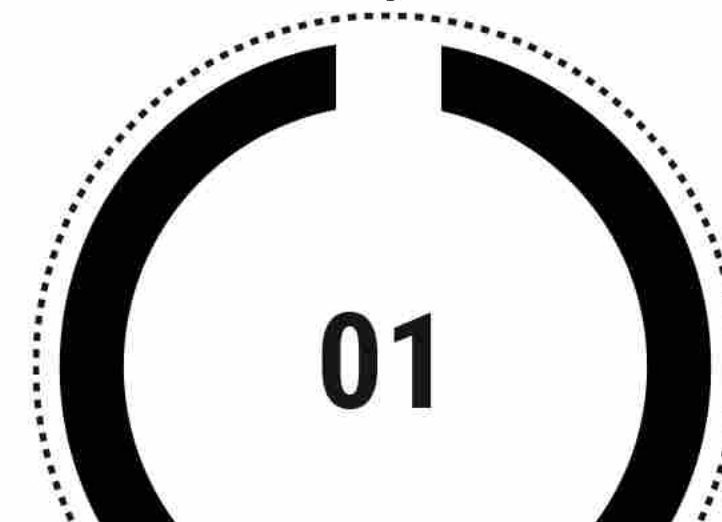
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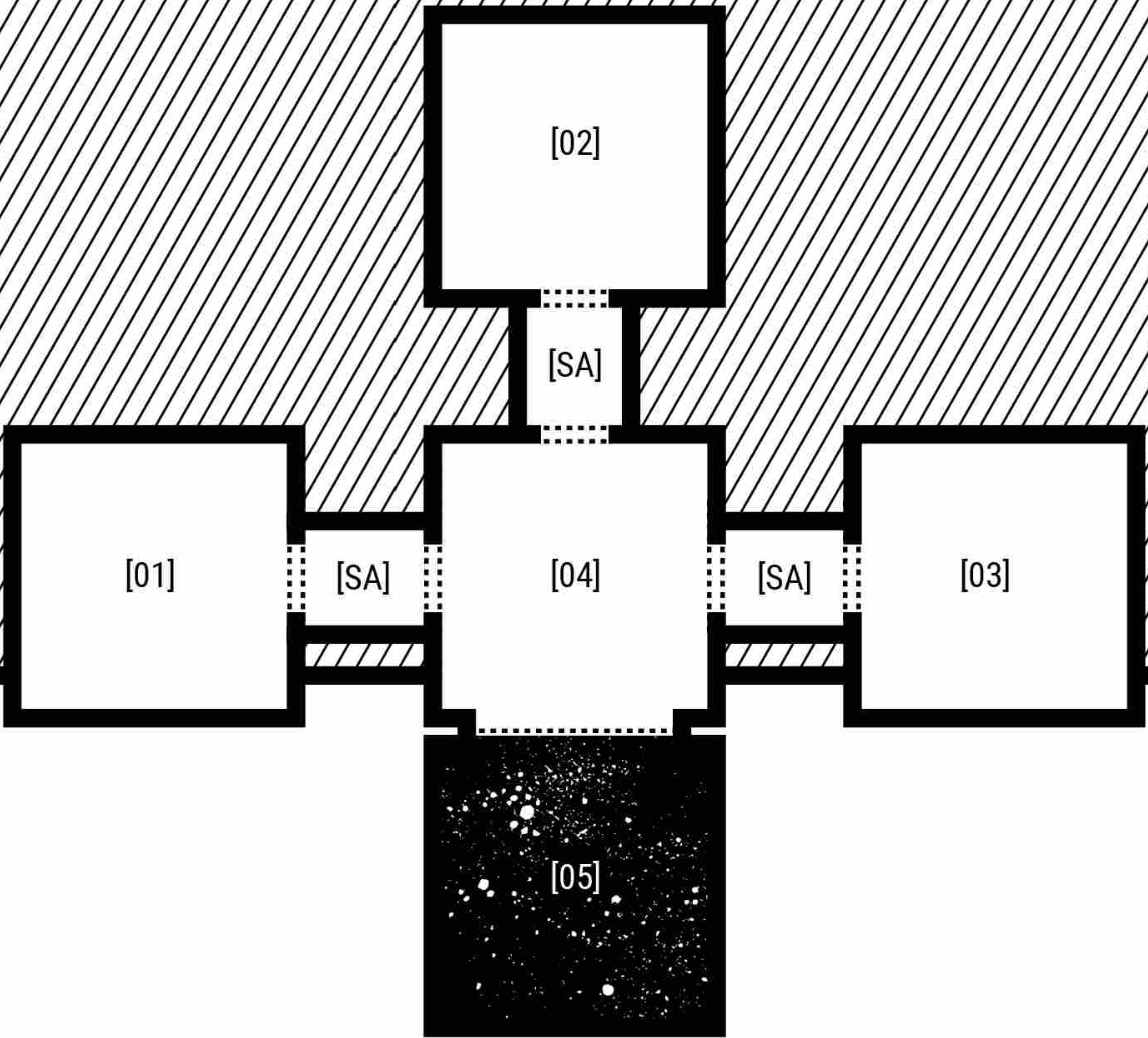
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DAMAGE CONTROL

REMOTE PRISON [PR_42] ****QUARANTINE****

PRISONER MANIFEST: 1610



- [SA].....SECURE ACCESS
- [01].....PROJECT PEGASUS.....[*restricted*]
- [02].....BLAAKGUARD.....[*destroyed*]
- [03].....FURY ACCESS.....[*classified*]
- [04].....PRISONER CELL [1610] ◆.....◆
- [05].....NEGATIVE ZONE

THE MAKER [1610]
MULTIVERSAL REED RICHARDS [DIVERGENT]

DANGER:
Prisoner possesses universal-level intellect combined with megalomania and personal dissociative disorder. Level one restrictions are in place, and extreme caution is advised.

SIX WEEKS AGO.
THE BLAAKGUARD BUILDING.

ALL
AROUND US,
OUR CITIES ARE
CRUMBLING.

I KNOW
THAT MANY MIGHT
CONSIDER SOMETHING LIKE
THIS THE APOTHEOSIS OF
MODERNITY'S BLIGHT, BUT
I WOULD NOT COUNT
MYSELF AMONG THAT
NUMBER.

NOR YOU,
REED, SO
WHY ARE WE
LOOKING AT
RUBBLE?





"IT'S BEST WHEN BEGINNING THESE THINGS TO REMEMBER HOW MUCH HARDER IT IS TO BUILD A THING THAN DESTROY A THING."

WHEN I SAW THE FOOTAGE-- WATCHED THE EXPLOSION AND THE BUILDING GO DOWN-- I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. LIKE MY MIND WAS TRYING TO SOLVE A PUZZLE THAT DIDN'T PRESENT AS ONE. SO I TRIED TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK--BUT WASN'T ALLOWED TO.

AH.



AND THEN--LIKE MANNA FROM HEAVEN--MY GOOD FRIEND WITH YEARS OF GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE AND CONNECTIONS CAME FOR A VISIT. AND I JUST HAD TO SHOW HIM THE SIGHTS.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW THICK THE RED TAPE IS ON THIS ONE.

FROM WHICH WE CAN INFER THAT SOMETHING WAS HIDDEN HERE... AND NO ONE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT IT.



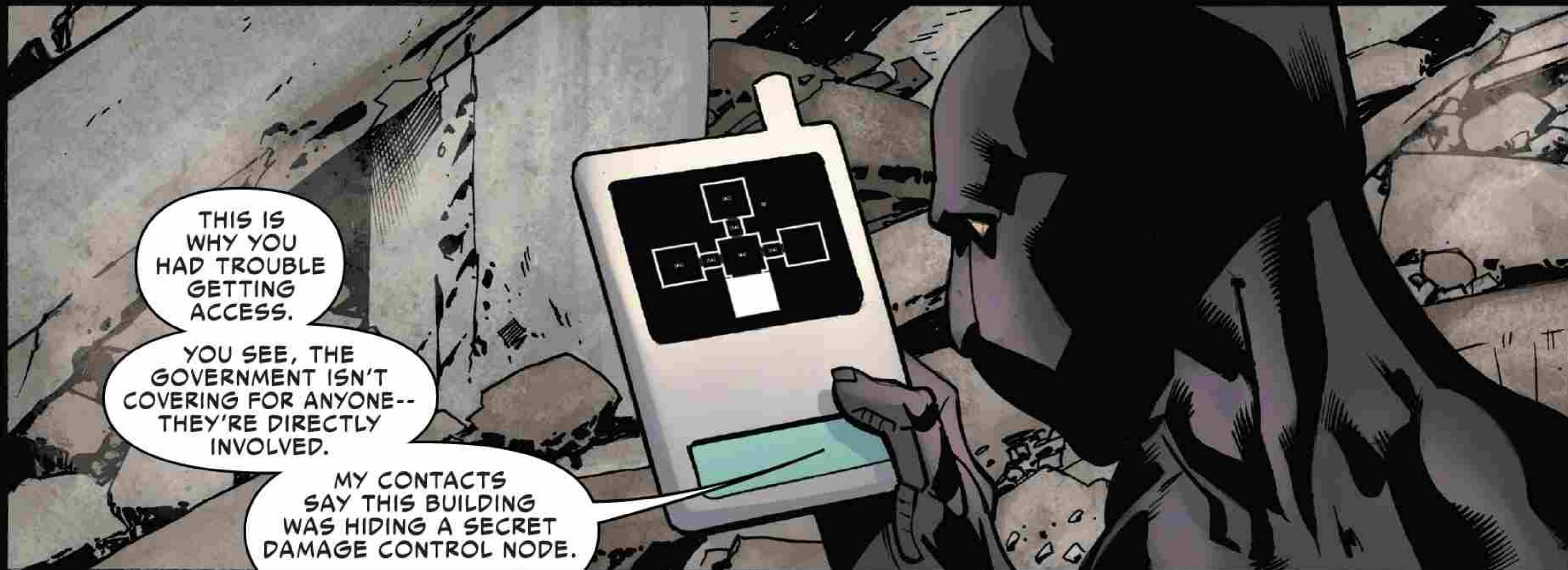
ONE QUESTION: WHY ARE WE BOTH PRETENDING THAT YOU COULDN'T FIND A WAY TO TAKE A LOOK IF YOU WANTED TO?

I WAS RECENTLY IN SOMETHING OF A RULE-FOLLOWING PHASE, T'CHALLA. I AM TRYING TO SHOW SOME RESTRAINT.



HOW'S THAT WORKING OUT FOR YOU?

NOT WELL.



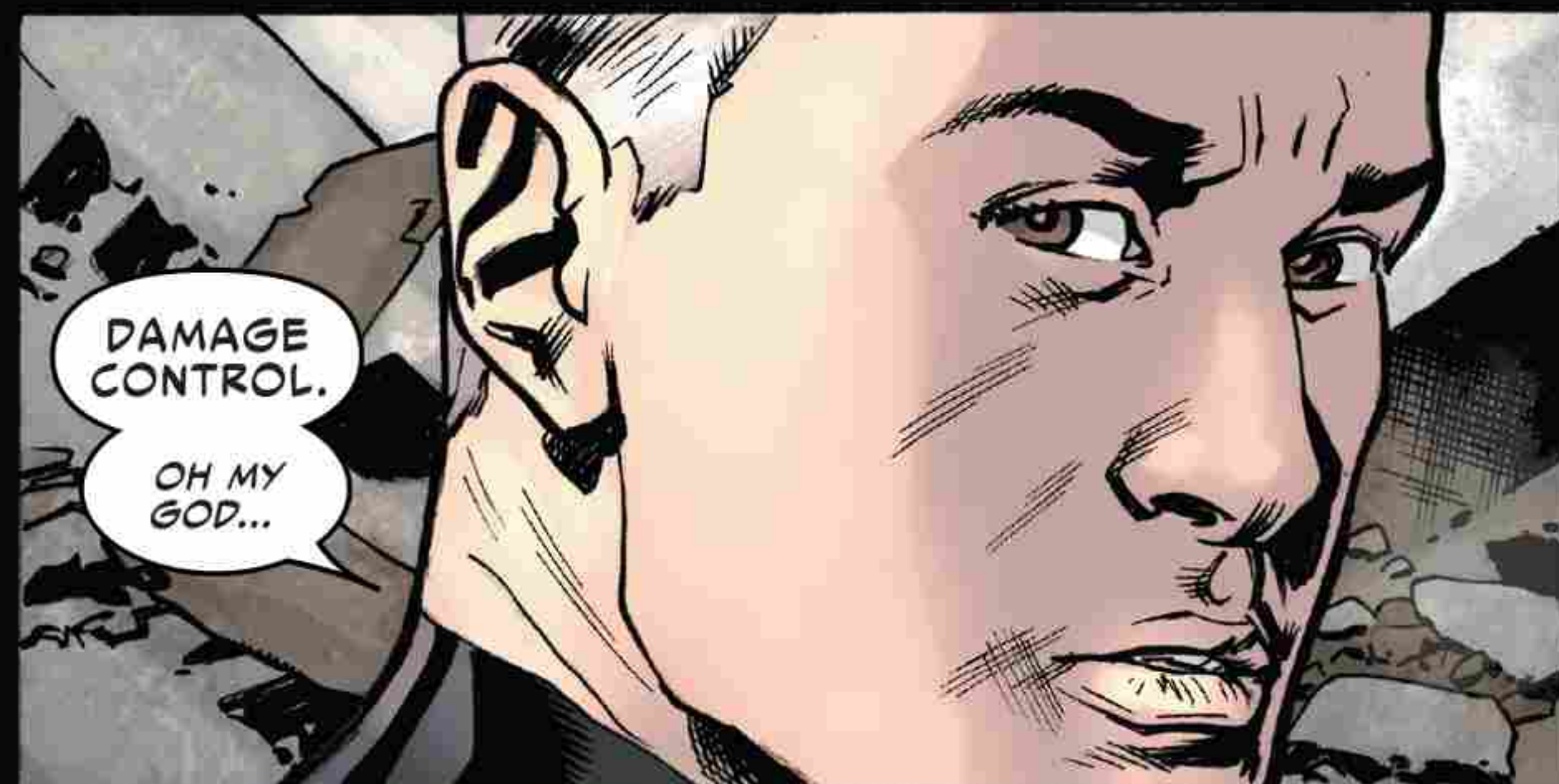
THIS IS WHY YOU HAD TROUBLE GETTING ACCESS.

YOU SEE, THE GOVERNMENT ISN'T COVERING FOR ANYONE-- THEY'RE DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

MY CONTACTS SAY THIS BUILDING WAS HIDING A SECRET DAMAGE CONTROL NODE.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT--OR WHO--THEY COULD HAVE HAD HIDDEN HERE?



DAMAGE CONTROL.

OH MY GOD...

LATER.



YOU CAN BREATHE NOW.

HE'S STILL HERE.

HMMM. PERHAPS...

IS THAT REALLY YOU, REED? ARE YOU REALLY ME?



IIFFFF
YOOOUU CAN'T
TEELLLL BYYYYY
NOWWWWW...



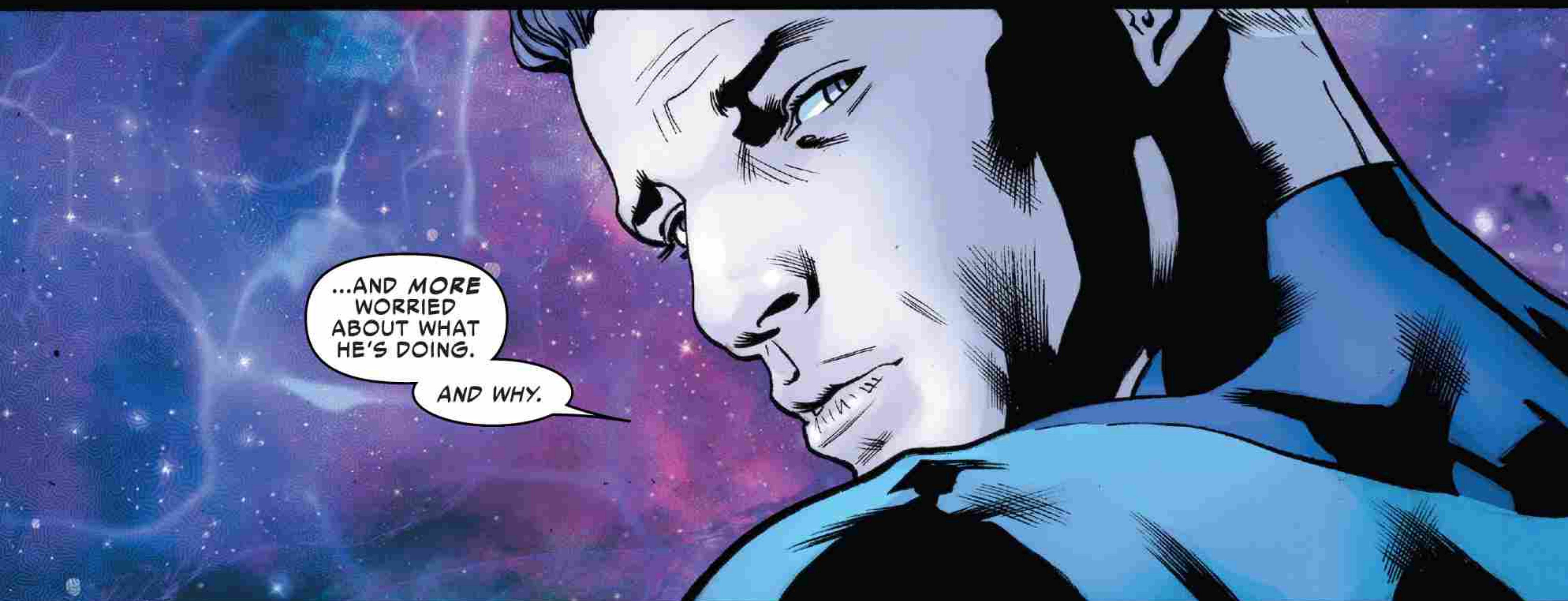
...COOOLD
YOOOOUUU
EVERRRR?



YOU'RE THE SMARTEST MAN IN THE
UNIVERSE, REED, AND NOW THERE'S
AN EVIL VERSION OF YOU LOOSE
IN THE WORLD.

THIS HAS TO
BE HANDLED QUICKLY.
WHERE DO YOU THINK
THE MAKER'S
GONE?

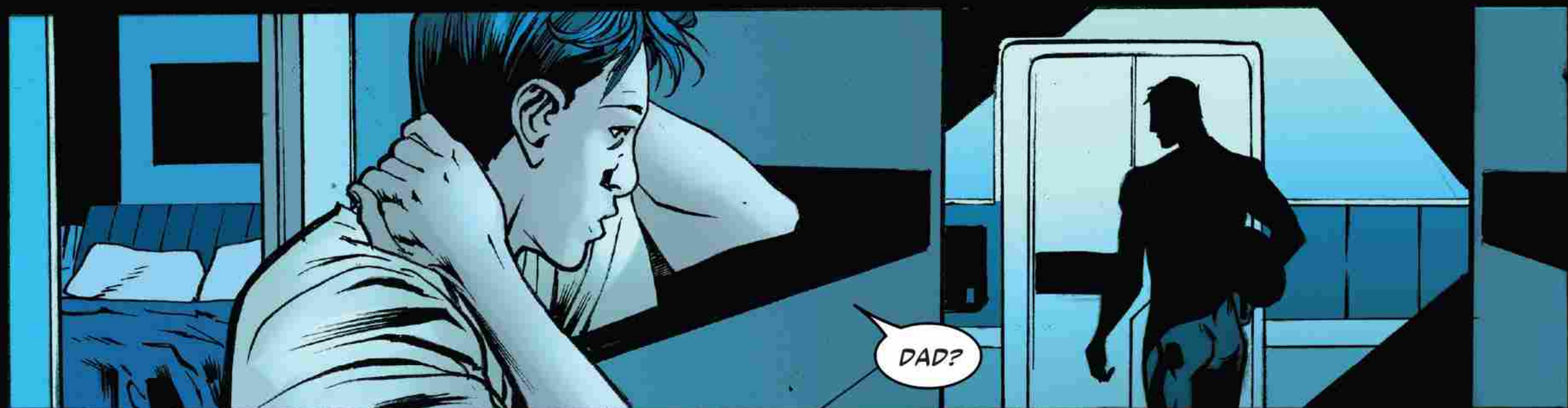
I'M **LESS**
WORRIED
ABOUT WHERE
HE IS...

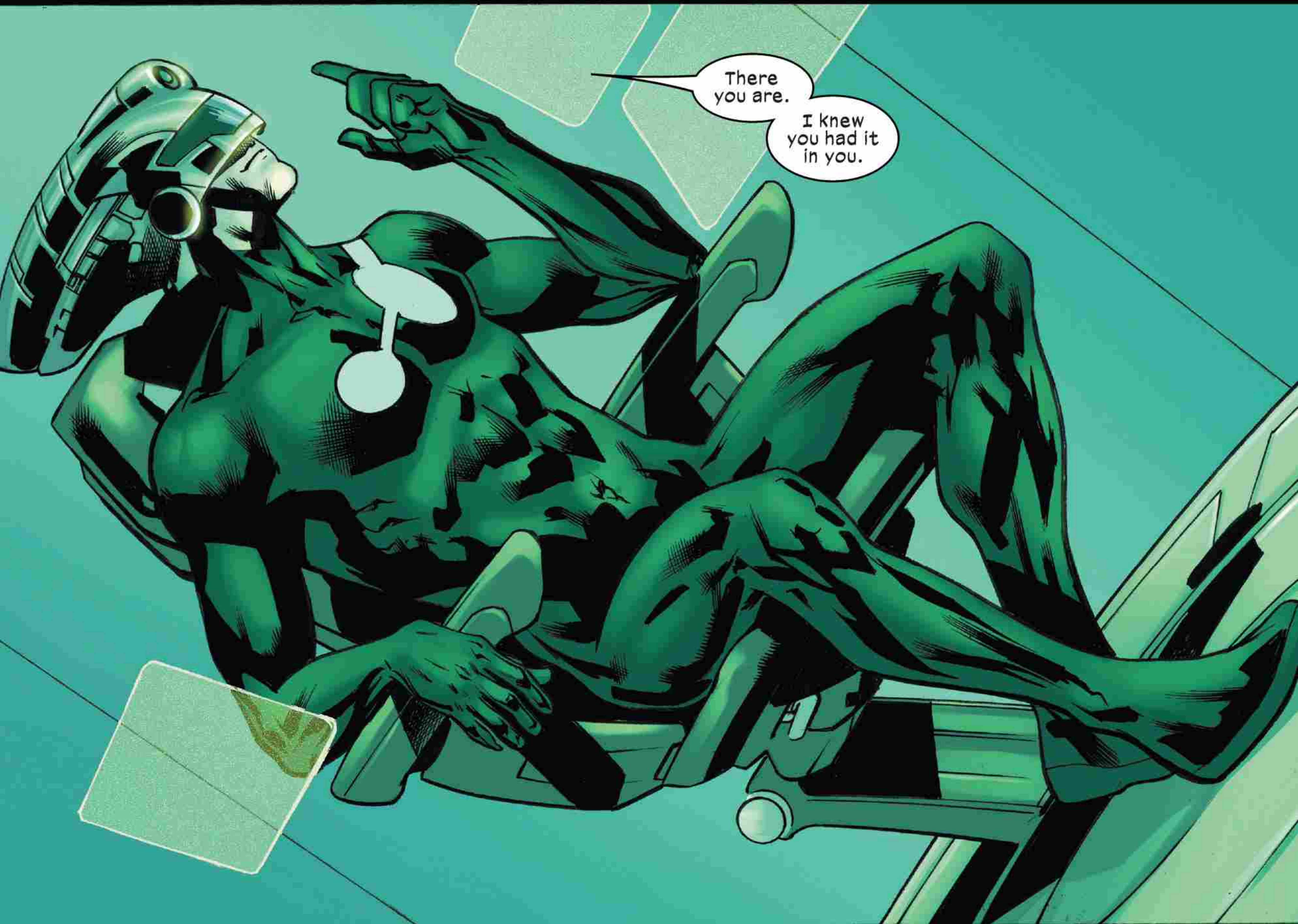
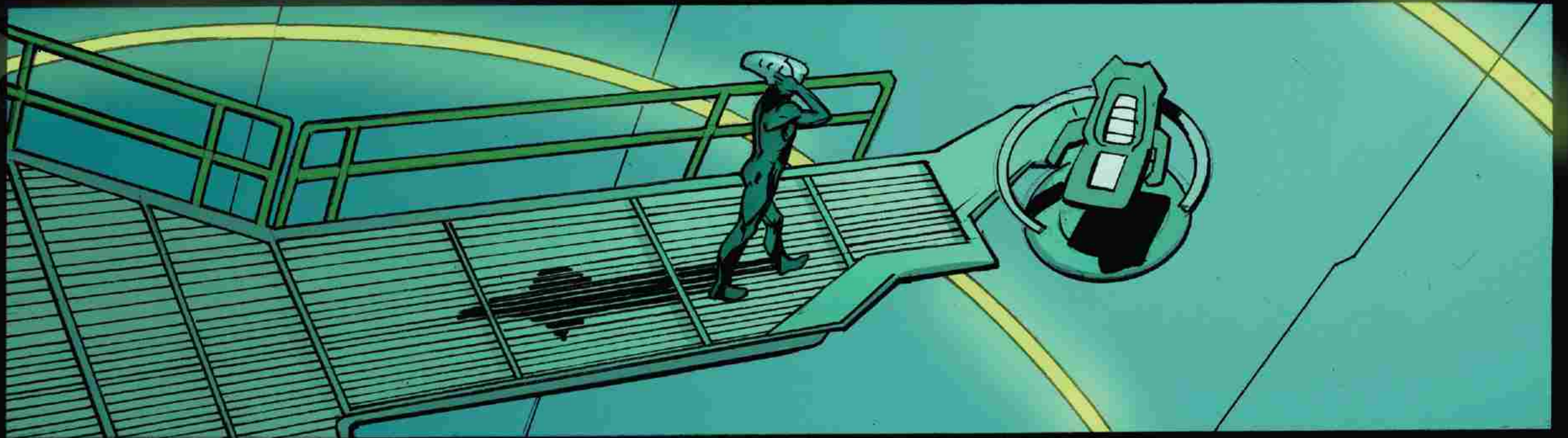


...AND **MORE**
WORRIED
ABOUT WHAT
HE'S DOING.

AND WHY.

ONE WEEK LATER.
THE BAXTER BUILDING.





THE NEXT DAY.
THE NECROPOLIS.

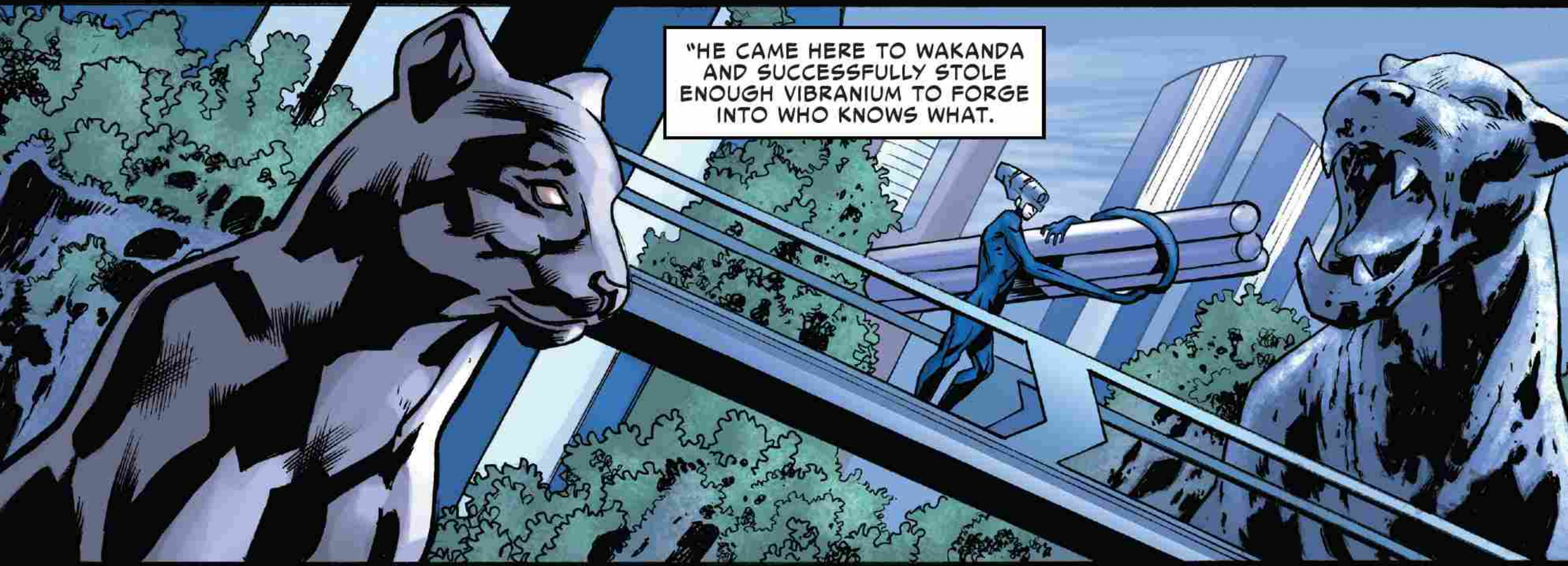


I'M
NOT SURE.
HE CLOSED THE
LOOP--COVERED
HIS TRACKS
WELL.

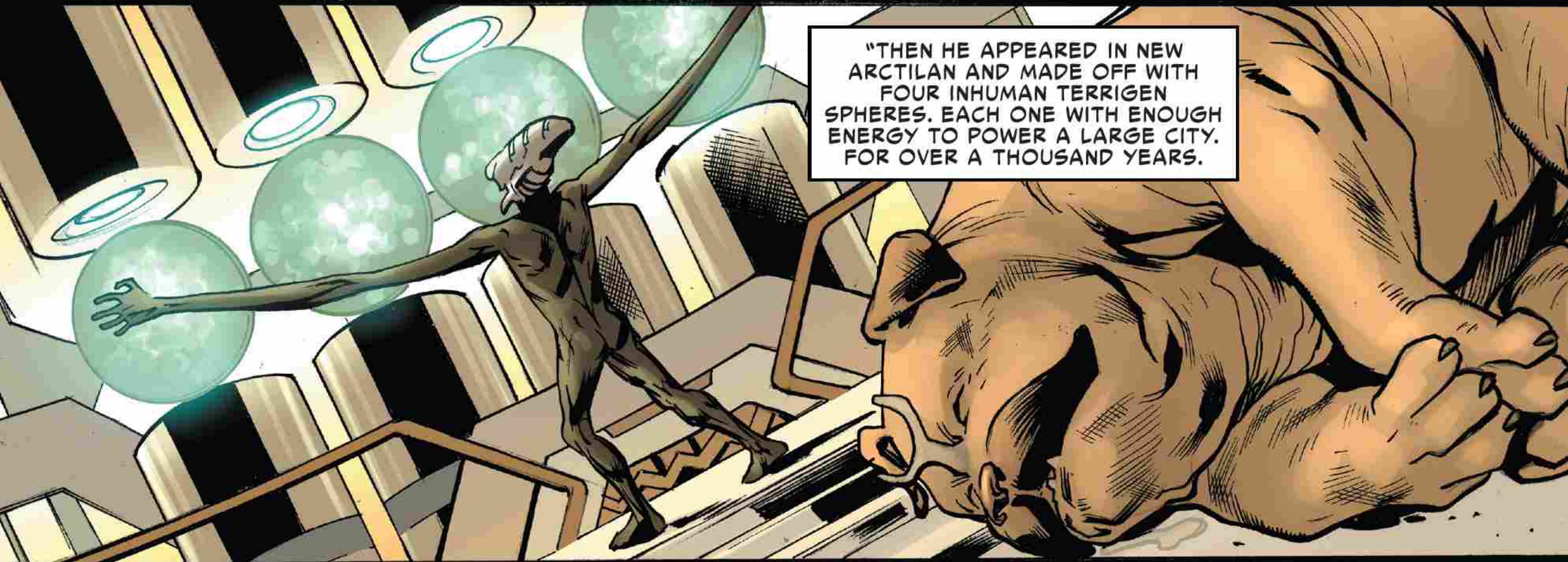
WHAT
WE DO KNOW
IS WHERE HE
WENT AFTER
THAT...



...DON'T
WE?



"HE CAME HERE TO WAKANDA
AND SUCCESSFULLY STOLE
ENOUGH VIBRANIUM TO FORGE
INTO WHO KNOWS WHAT.



"THEN HE APPEARED IN NEW
ARCTILAN AND MADE OFF WITH
FOUR INHUMAN TERRIGEN
SPHERES. EACH ONE WITH ENOUGH
ENERGY TO POWER A LARGE CITY.
FOR OVER A THOUSAND YEARS.



"AFTER THAT, HE STOLE
A BRIDGE OF MINE THAT
WAS NOT SUPPOSED
TO BE IN STORAGE AT A
SECRET STARK WAREHOUSE
IN LONG ISLAND.

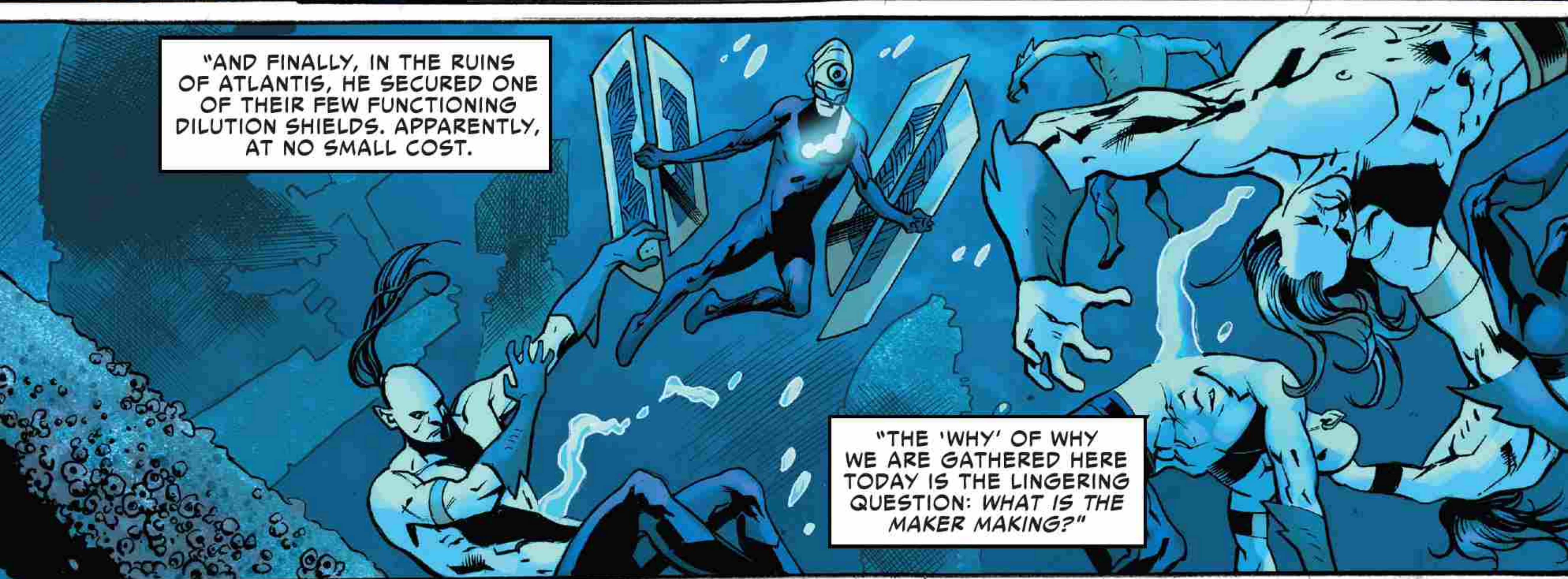


"AND THEN HE SOMEHOW
MADE OFF WITH A MUTANT
GATEWAY--WHICH WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE UNMOVABLE
AND USELESS TO ANYONE NOT
POSSESSING A MUTANT GENE.

"GOD KNOWS
WHAT HE'S
THINKING THERE.



"HE THEN ABSCONDED WITH AN IMMUNITY LANCE HE FOUND IN THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM."



"AND FINALLY, IN THE RUINS OF ATLANTIS, HE SECURED ONE OF THEIR FEW FUNCTIONING DILUTION SHIELDS. APPARENTLY, AT NO SMALL COST."

"THE 'WHY' OF WHY WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY IS THE LINGERING QUESTION: WHAT IS THE MAKER MAKING?"



GIVEN ENOUGH TIME, I'M SURE WE COULD MAKE SOME ASSUMPTIONS OF WHAT HE'S BUILDING BASED ON THE RESOURCES GATHERED...

BUT THE TWO GATEWAYS, BOTH THE SPEAR AND THE SHIELD...WHY THE REDUNDANCIES?

IT'S A MESSAGE. TO THE INEVITABLE GATHERING OF THE GROUP OF US. SOME KIND OF UNMISTAKABLE GRAND GESTURE...TALKING SLOWLY FOR THE CHILDREN...

HE WANTS US TO KNOW.



YES. AND THE COMPONENTS HE STOLE ARE UNIQUE AND IDENTIFIABLE. HE HAS TO KNOW THAT WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR THOSE ENERGY SIGNATURES...AND HE HAS TO KNOW THAT WE'LL KNOW WHEN HE TURNS IT ON.

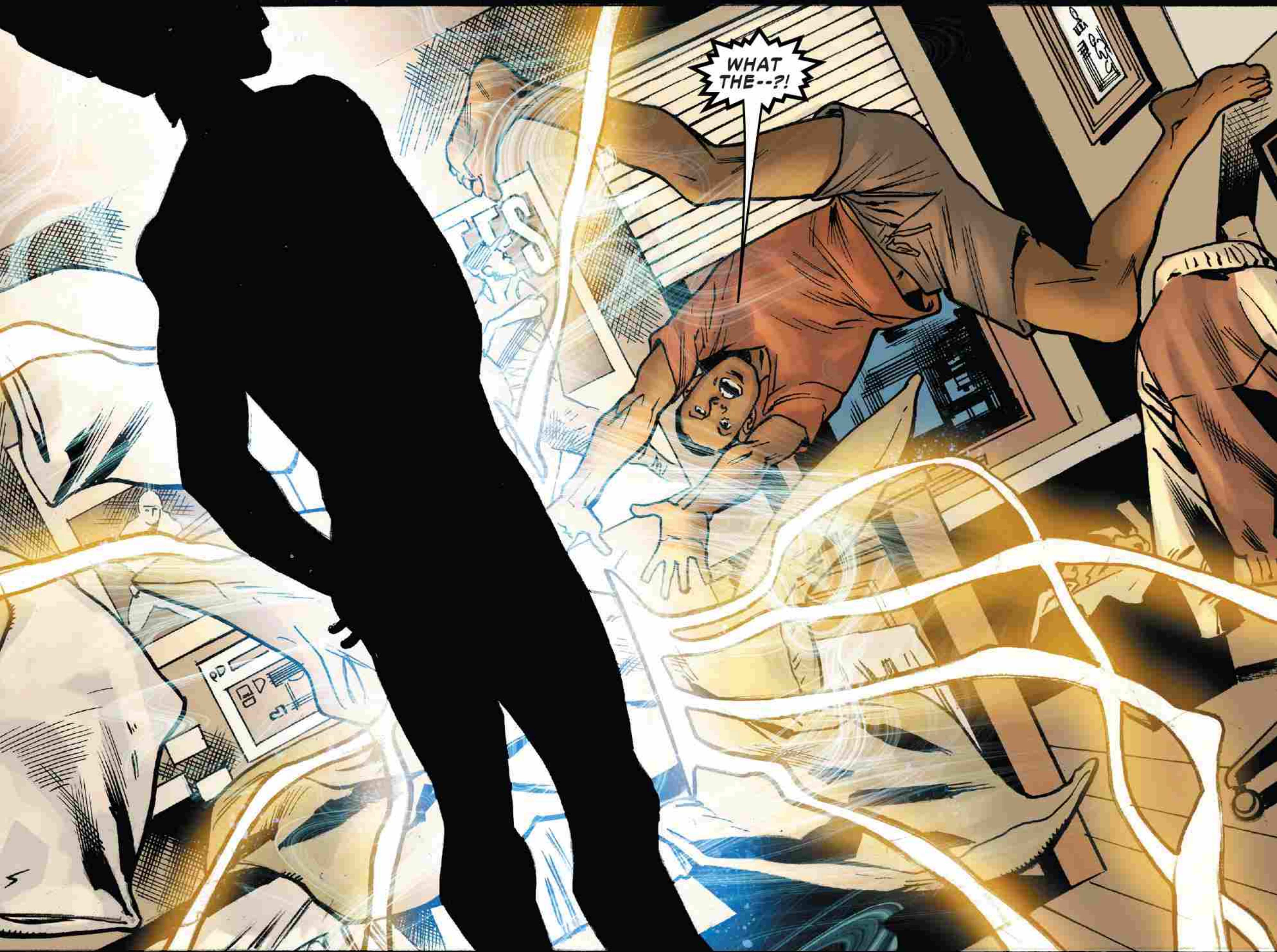
SO WHAT'S HE WAITING FOR?



LATER THAT SAME DAY.
BROOKLYN.



How can you possibly sleep with the world moving as it is--the gears of this fraudulent, infernal machine grinding our bones to dust?



WHAT THE--?!



WHO ARE YOU?



Have we not met? I cannot tell with so many of you...

The *masks* and *monikers* and--more than that--the *repetitive nature* of so many of you...heroes.

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?



You are Miles Morales, and I...
...am your brother.



...
WHAT?



I read about it in *his* records. It was some trick of universal rebirth and reality-shaping, as I understand it... But according to the secret history...

...it's something every creature on this planet--in this universe--shares.



But you and I have something that sets us apart from them. Apart from their shared history.

We are the only two survivors of a dead universe, Miles. The only living children of gods erased from history.

Did you know that?



DID YOU NOT?

No, not in the way I do now. But if you know, then you must feel the same itch that I do. The one you cannot reach, the one you cannot scratch...

The pull of nothingness and oblivion that we share with the world we are from--the feeling of lives erased and forgotten.



...
WHY ARE YOU HERE?



I am going... home.



Would you like to come with me?



OH MAN...
YOU'RE TOTALLY SERIOUS, AREN'T YOU?



Yes. It felt wrong to go and not ask you to come along.

I would want to be asked, if the roles were reversed.







Now, Reed.
Why would you lie
to yourself like
that?

How can
you stop me when
you know neither
where I'm going nor
what I'm going
to do?

And I
promise you, by
the time you do
figure it out, I will
have already left
you long
behind.

My path,
you see,
is set.
My course
fixed.



WE'LL
FOLLOW
YOU.

WE'LL FIND
YOU.



The Bridge controller is set to
purge and randomize as soon
as I travel through.

You might be able
to find where I went if
I didn't run the sequencing
through the gateway. But I
did...and as we both know, that
kind of biological encoding is the
best encryption under this,
or any other, sun.

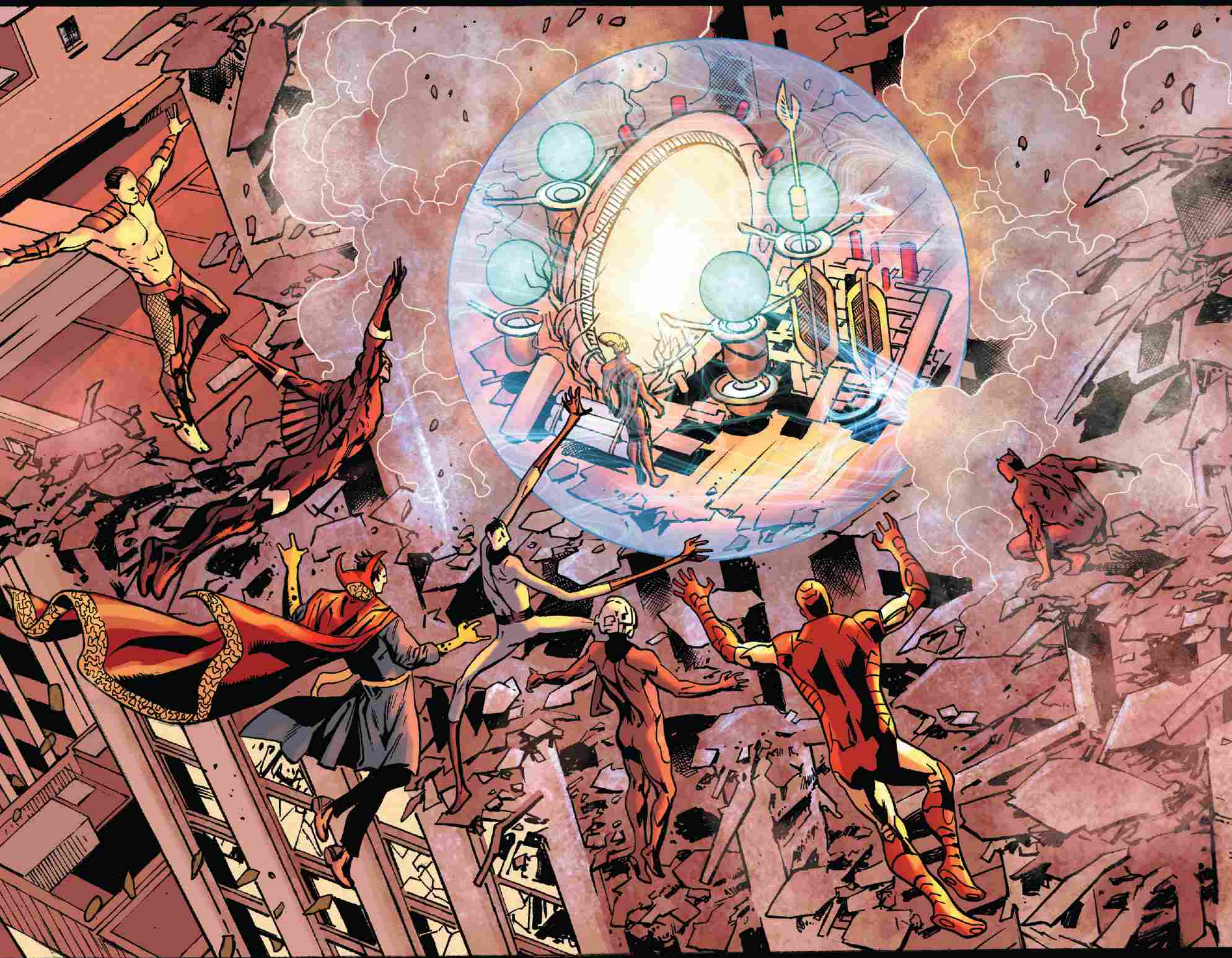


IT CAN BE DONE.
ANYTHING CAN
BE DONE.

Yes, but
the time it would
take. It's measured
in years, decades
even...

Do you
really want to
find me that
badly?





Finished?



YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.



Do I? I've often wondered, if our roles had been reversed, would I be any different? Would you?

It's why I waited--why I left this trail for you to follow.

It was for this moment. So I could ask you one simple question:

If you could do it all again--if you could truly change things--if you had the chance...

...would you erase me from existence?

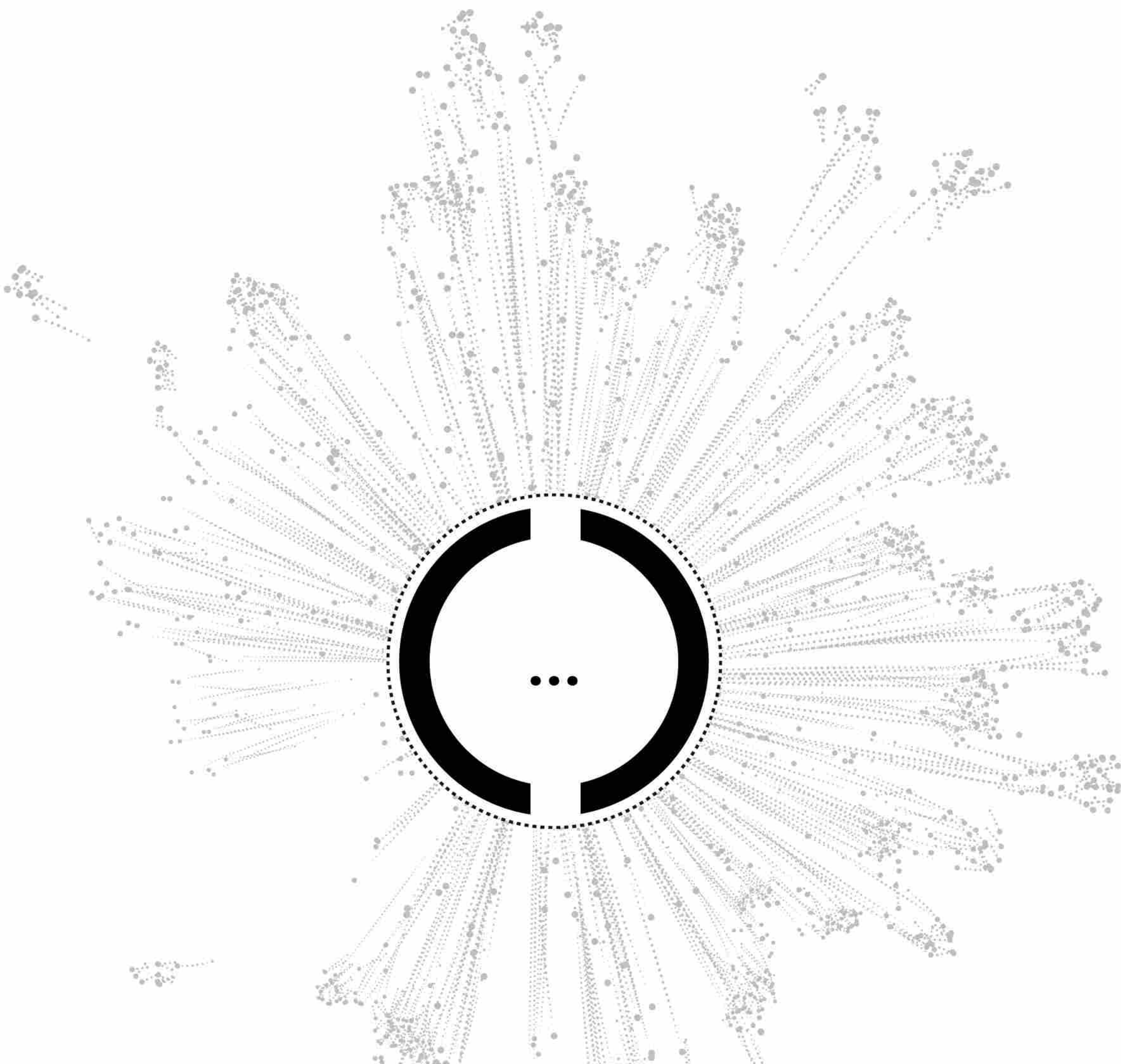


...
...
YES.



I'll keep that in mind.







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**EPILOGUE:
"GREAT ARTISTS STEAL"**

Now.
But also then.



You're late, Peter Parker.

What a surprise.



I know, Liz, I know. Something came up. Something always comes up.

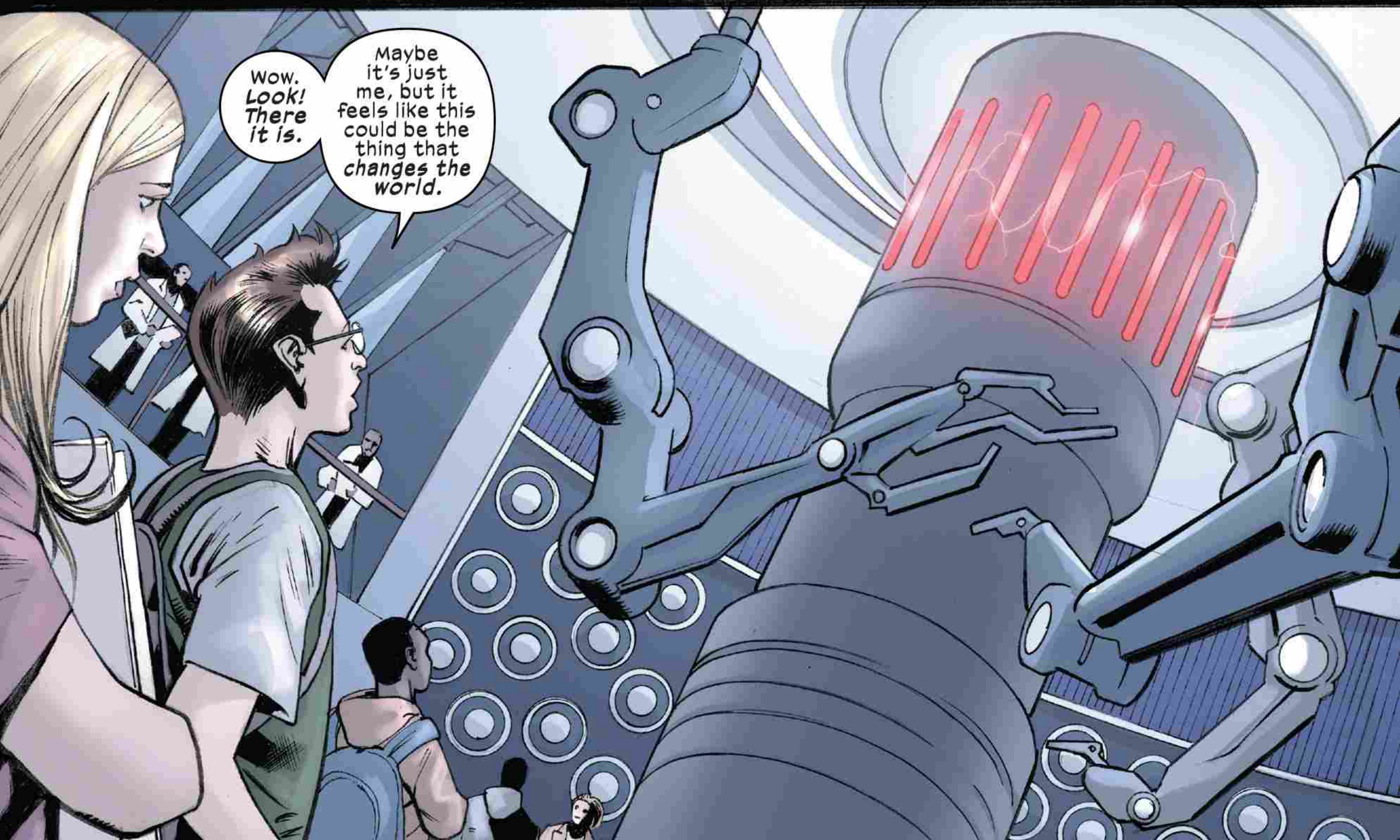
Whatever, you're here now... *this* better be good.



So where do you want to--?

We should go that way. The east wing.

Dr. Schwinner has built some new machine. There's supposed to be a demonstration, and I don't want to miss it.



Wow. Look! *There it is.*

Maybe it's just me, but it feels like this could be the thing that *changes the world.*



If I could have everyone's attention, please...

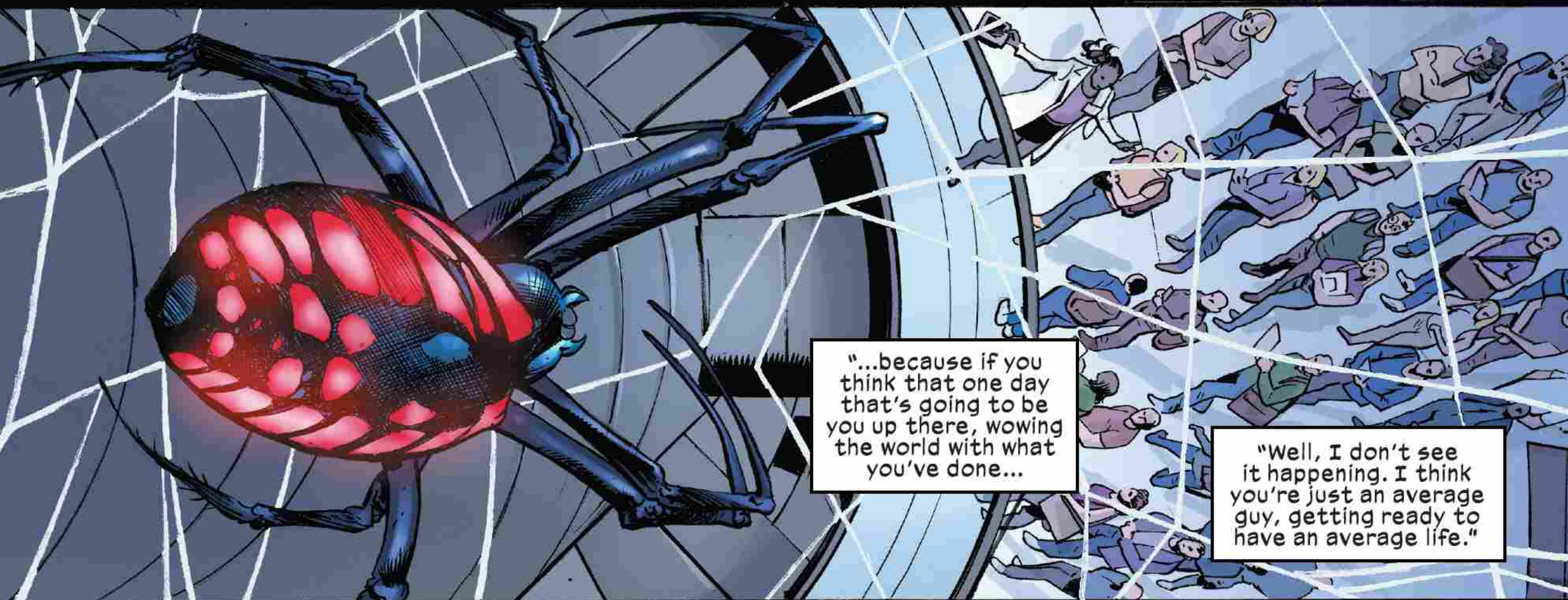
This... *this* is the Isotope Genome Accelerator.



Hrmpht. I think you're easily impressed, Parker.

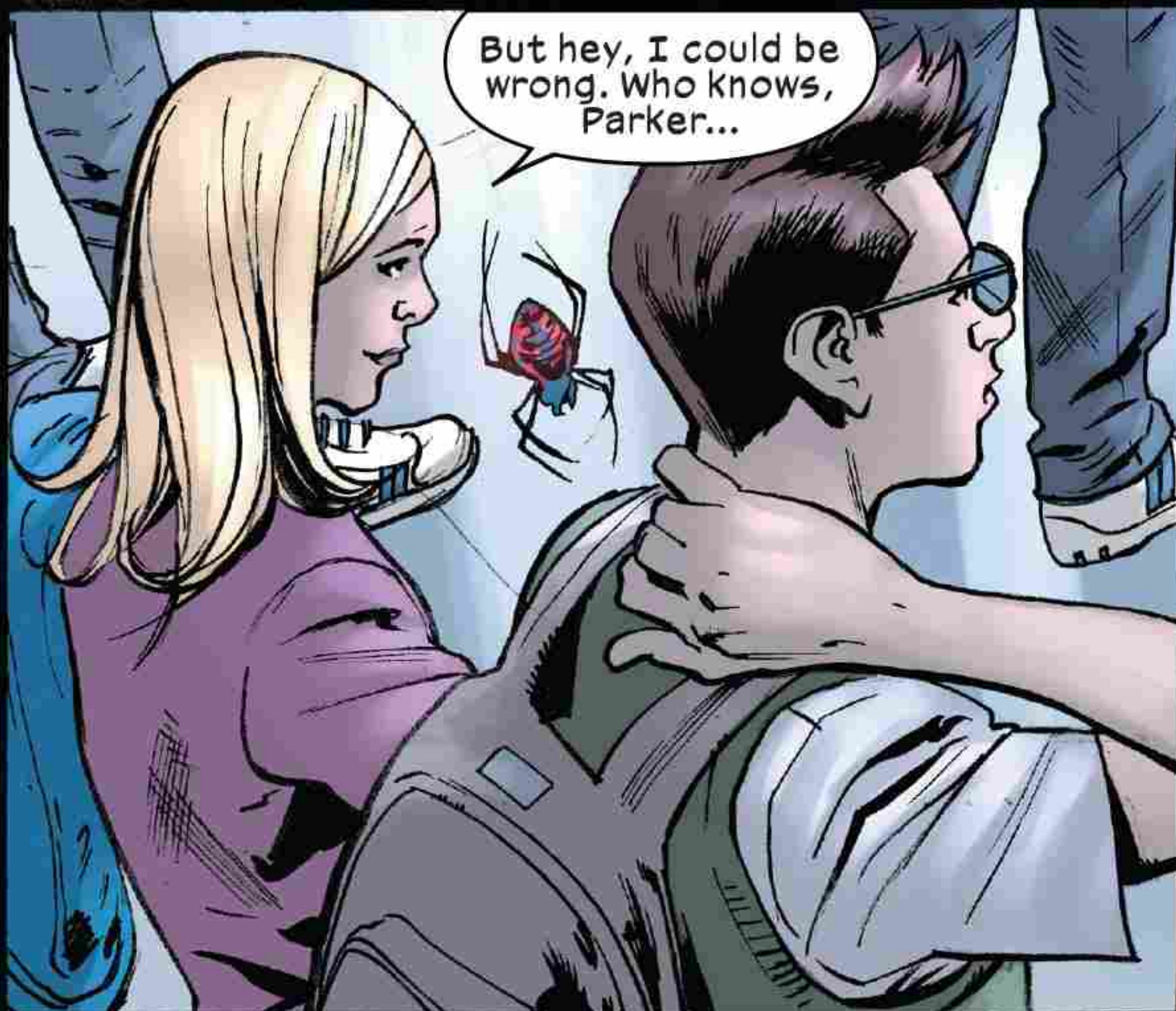
I think I just dream big.

Dream is the right word...

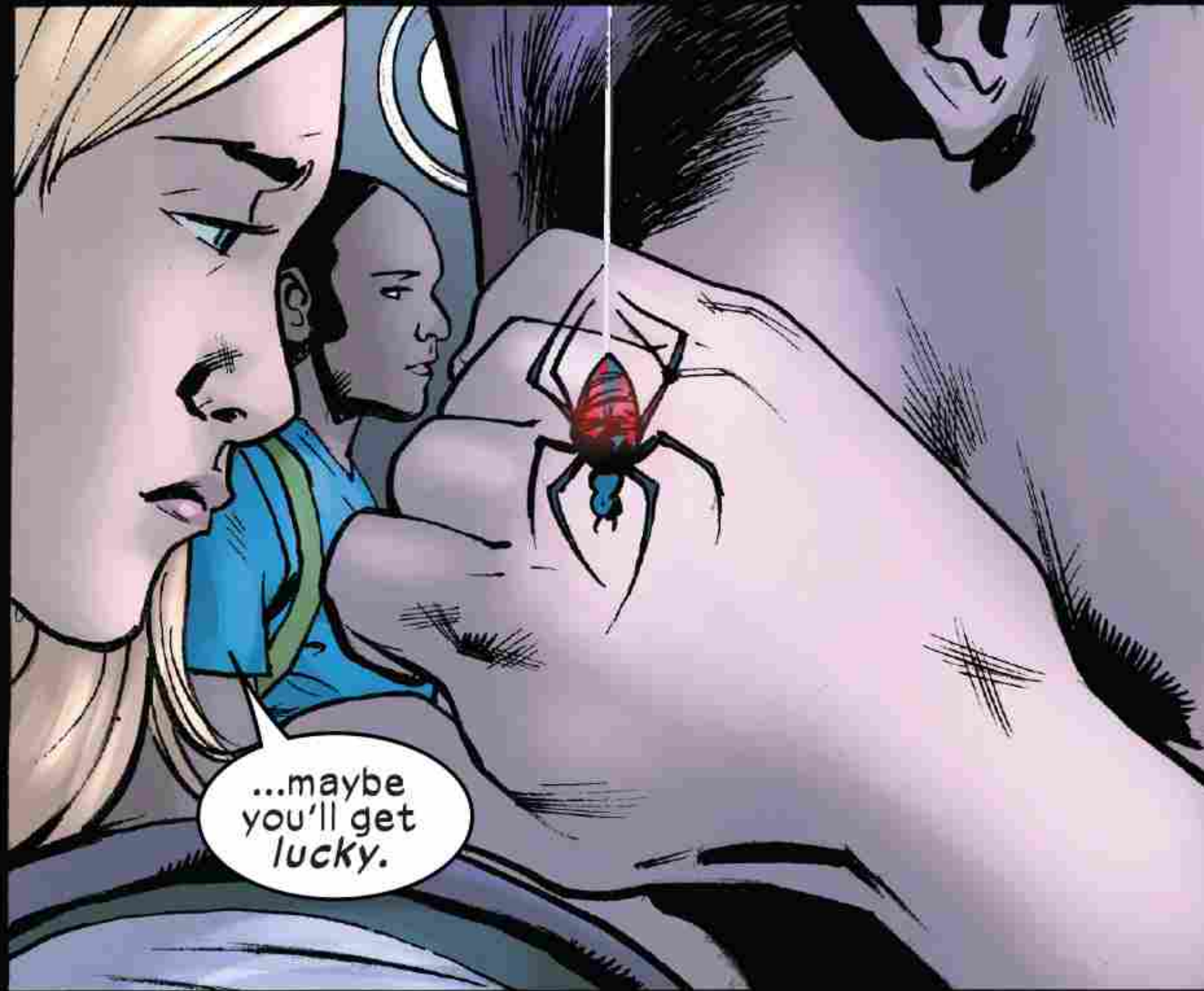


"...because if you think that one day that's going to be you up there, wowing the world with what you've done..."

"Well, I don't see it happening. I think you're just an average guy, getting ready to have an average life."



But hey, I could be wrong. Who knows, Parker...



...maybe you'll get lucky.







**NEXT
ISSUE**

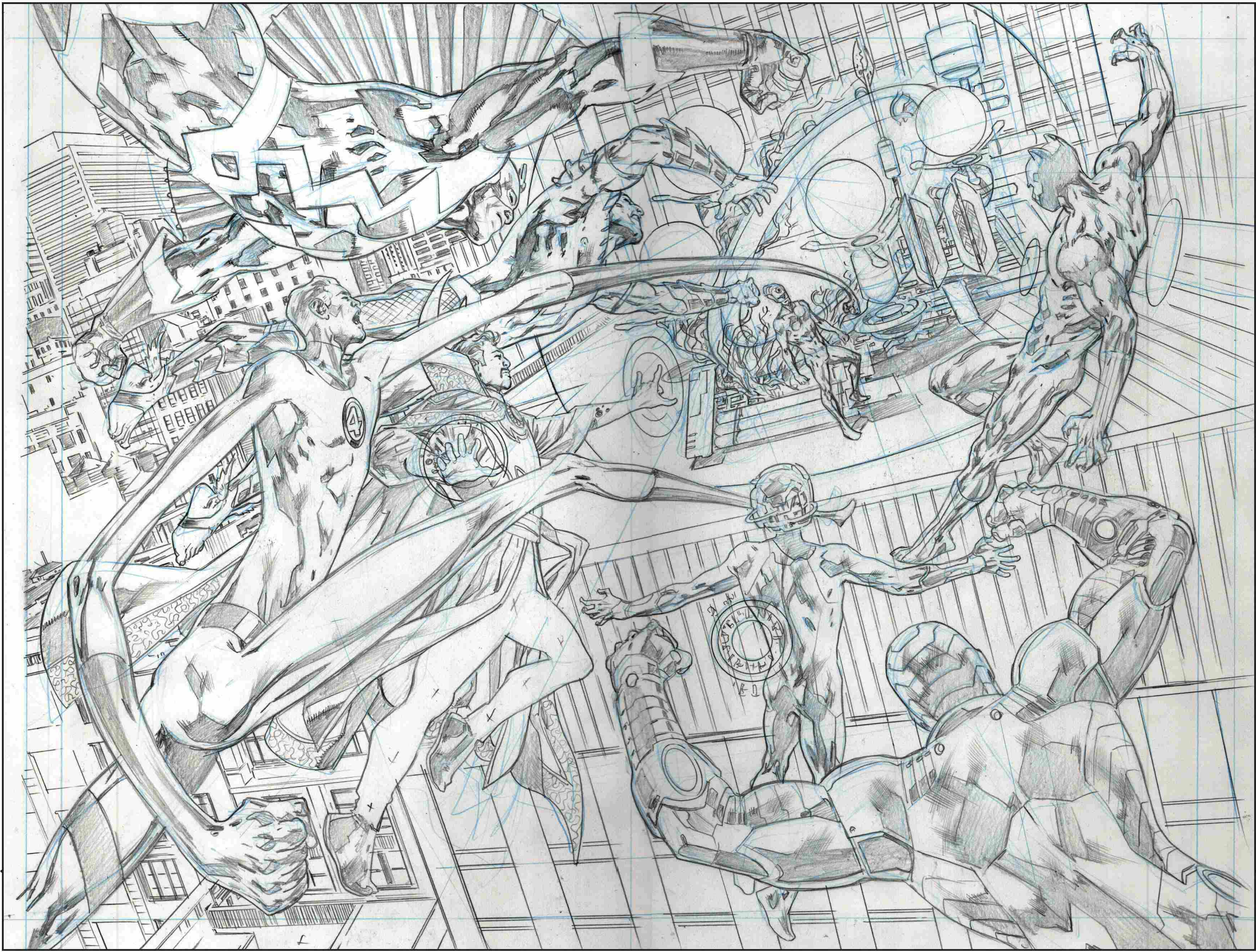


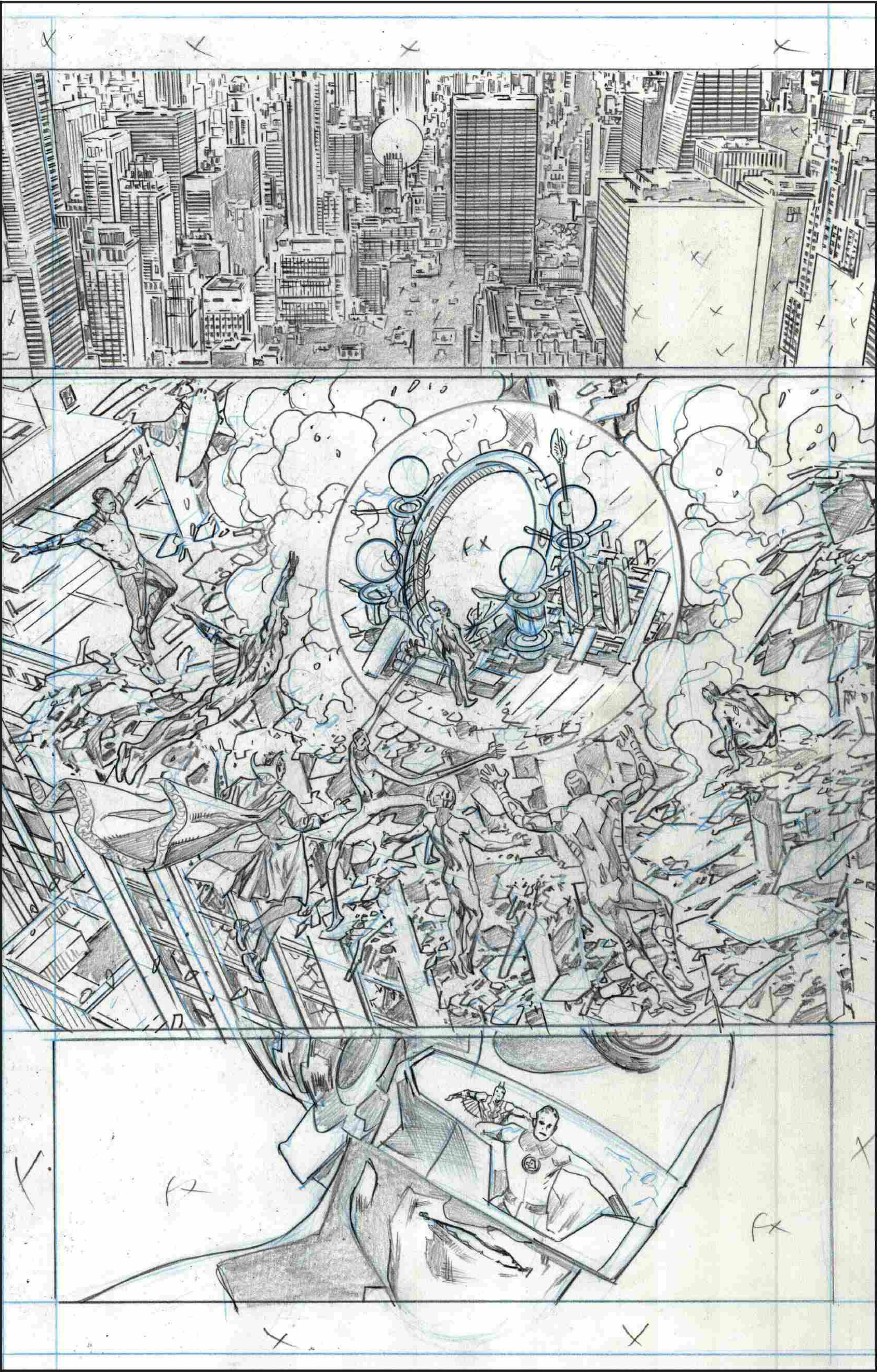
ULTIMATE
INVASION

PENCILSBRYAN HITCH



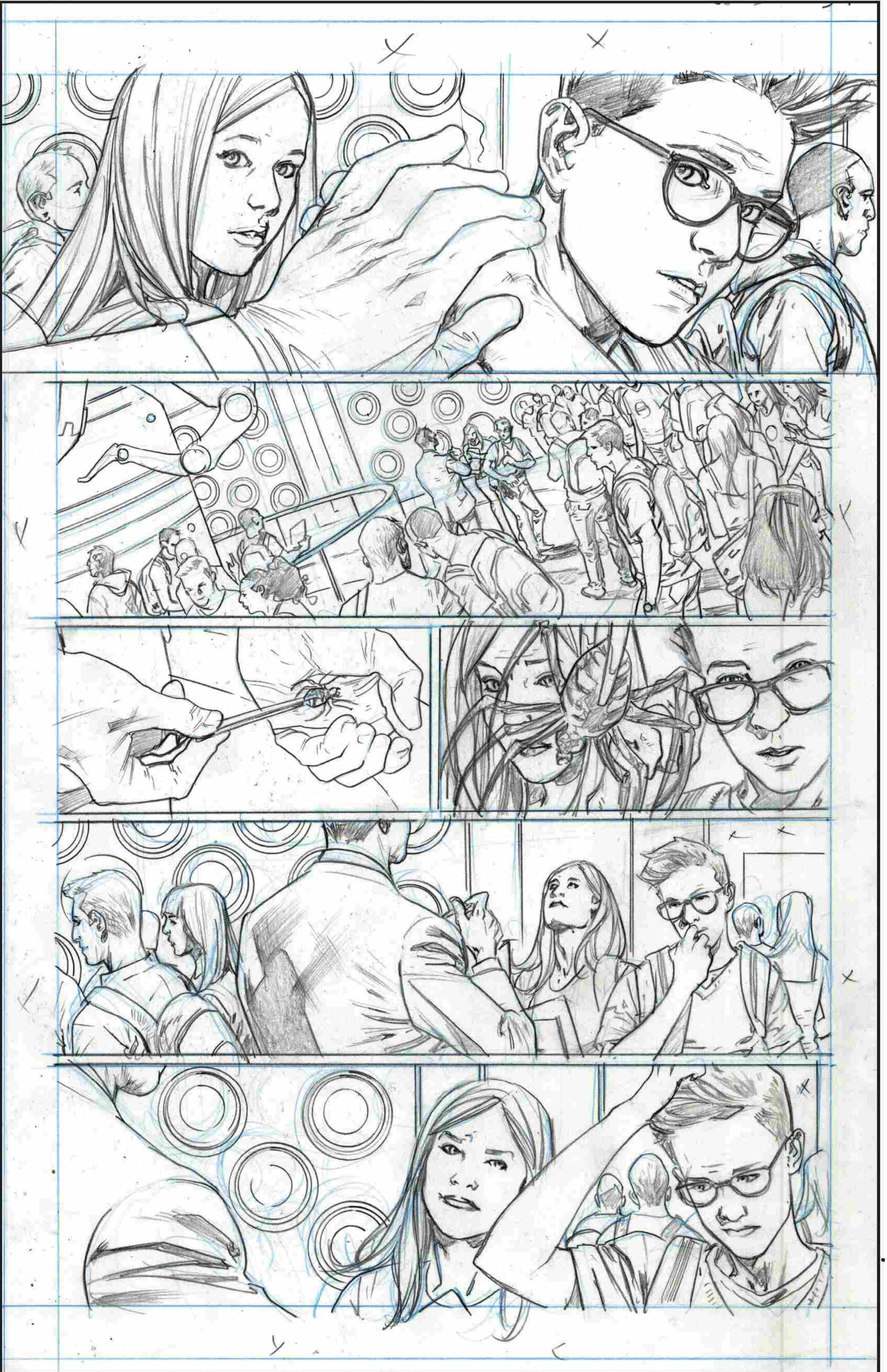
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ZONE